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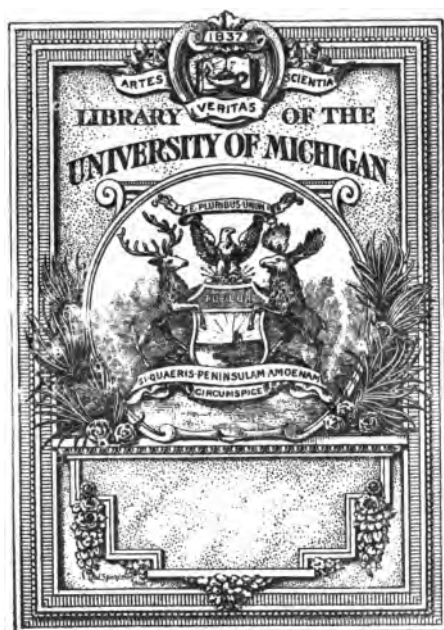
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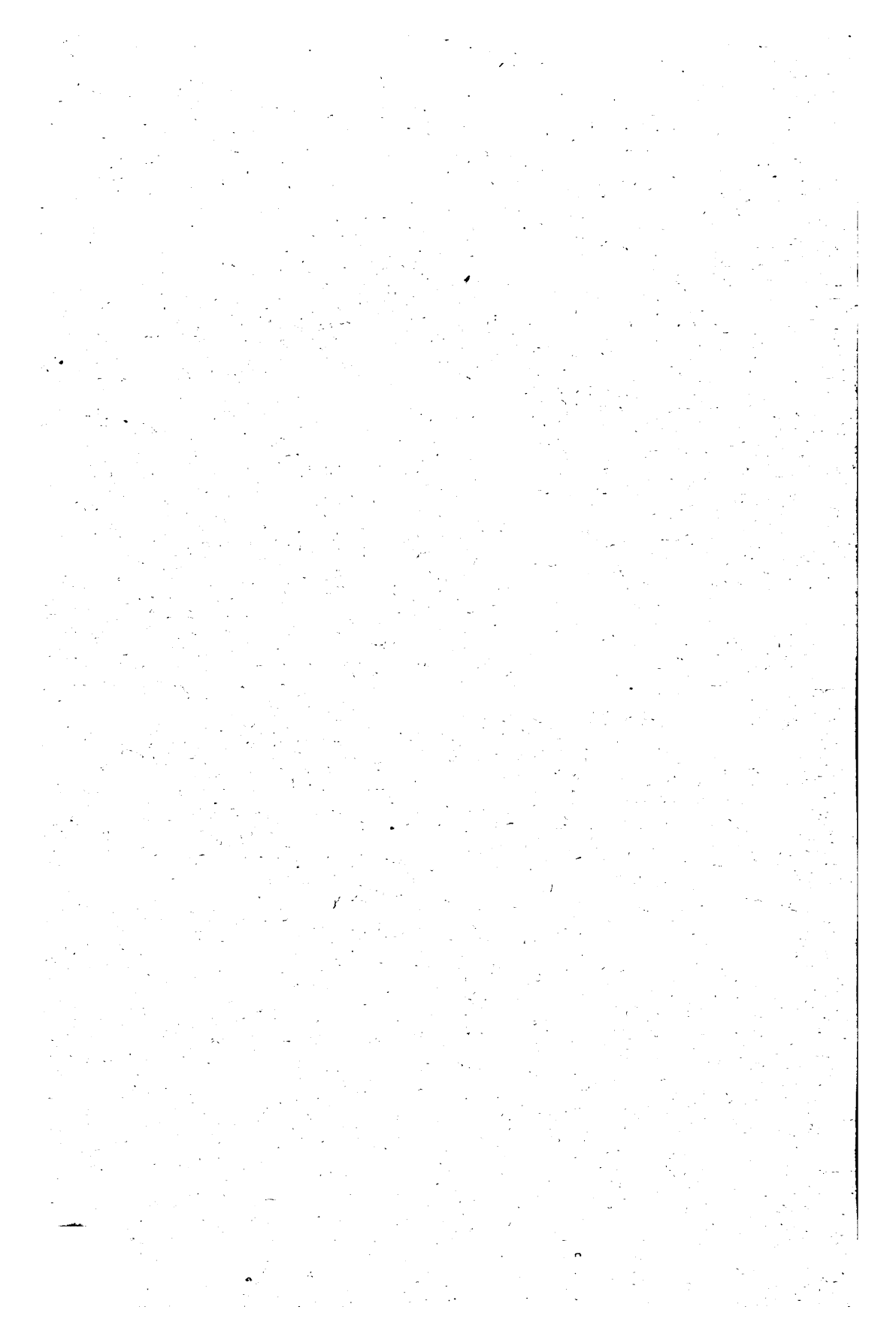
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STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA PUBLICATIONS.  
HISTORICAL MONOGRAPH.

No. 2.

HISTORY  
OF  
THE TRAPPIST ABBEY  
OF  
NEW MELLERAY,  
IN DUBUQUE COUNTY, IOWA.

BY  
WILLIAM RUFUS PERKINS, A.M.,  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY.

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1892.

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## PREFACE.

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The history of Mt. Melleray in Ireland, and of New Melleray in Dubuque County, Iowa, is founded upon original sources, viz: the records and manuscripts of the Abbeys and oral communications of the monks.

The editions of Helyot and of Felibien which have been used for the earlier history of the monastic houses are respectively those of 1715-21, and 1671.

The letter of Felibien to the Duchesse de Liancourt, and which constitutes the volume usually known as "Description de la Trappe," was first printed in 1671. The edition used by the author is that of 1671, and the volume was originally in the library of the Carmelites at Rennes. This library was probably despoiled at the time of the French Revolution, and the little book, in its original binding, has wandered at last to the prairies of Iowa.

The author desires to express his deep obligation to the authorities of New Melleray Abbey, and in particular to the Rev. Father Superior and to Rev. Father Placid, for courtesy and assistance. Few men engaged in historical researches have met with so cordial and hearty appreciation as has been vouchsafed by the monks of New Melleray to the author. It is impossible for me adequately to express my sense of their kindness and thoughtfulness and hospitality.

Recd. 7-16-35

I desire especially to thank the Rev. Father Placid for unnumbered kindnesses, and to express here my warm affection for him, an affection which rests not only upon his indefatigable efforts in my behalf as a historian, but which rests also upon my appreciation of him as a high-minded and excellent man.

W. R. P.

*Iowa City, July, 1892.*

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HISTORY  
OF THE  
TRAPPIST ABBEY OF NEW MELLERAY  
IN  
DUBUQUE COUNTY, IOWA.

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The ancient Abbey of Nôtre Dame de la Maison-Dieu de la Trappe lies in a secluded valley near the frontiers of Perche in the present department of the Orne.\* The name is derived from the physical nature of the country which, diversified with hills, discloses at least one valley whose entrance is through a narrow and rocky gorge. This entrance, which to some vivid imagination seemed like a trap-door, gave a name to the village and the adjacent monastery. The following description of the Abbey and its surroundings, published in 1671, will give some idea of the impression which its situation produced in the last part of the seventeenth century.

"This Abbey is situated in a large valley. The woods and the hills which surround it are disposed as if designed to hide it from the rest of the world. They enclose arable lands, plantations of fruit trees, pasture grounds, and nine ponds which encompass the Abbey, and render it so difficult of access that it is very hard to come at it without a guide. There was hitherto a road from Montagne to Paris behind the walls of the garden; but though it was in the wood, and above five hundred paces from the enclosure, and though it was not possible to remove it farther without a vast expense, yet the

Abbot turned it another way, in order to render the place around the Monastery more solitary. And indeed nothing is more so than this desert. For though there are several towns and large villages at three leagues distance round it, yet to people who are there it seems to be a lonely and foreign country. Silence reigns throughout; and if any noise is heard, it is only the rustling of trees shaken by the wind, or the brooks running through the pebbles. This Abbey discovers itself at going out of the forest of Perche, when one is coming from the south; and though the traveler thinks himself very near, he finds it almost a mile before he reaches it. But having at last descended the hill, crossed the heath, and gone on a little way amongst hedges and through shady paths, he comes to the first court, where the receiver's apartment is. It is separated from those of the monks by a strong palisade of pales and thorns which the Abbot caused to be made after he retired thither."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the lonely and secluded position of the Abbey of La Trappe in 1671, just before the Peace of Nimeguen made Louis XIV. the arbiter of Europe.

To understand the history of the Trappist Abbey of New Melleray, in Dubuque County, Iowa, we must first become somewhat familiar with the movement which engendered the severe and rigid rule which the Trappists observe, and with the origin both of La Grande Trappe (the mother house), and of Melleray, from which the Abbey of New Melleray is directly descended.

#### BRIEF SKETCH OF EARLY REFORM.

In about the year 535 of our era, St. Benedict, from the solitude of Monte Cassino gave to the western world the code of religious life which has stamped monasticism for the last thirteen hundred years, and which to-day bears the name of

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<sup>1</sup> *Felibien, Description de la Abbaye de la Trappe*, pp. 6, seq. (Paris, 1671.)

the Holy Rule.<sup>1</sup> The splendid monastery upon Monte Cassino is the successor of the simple one, founded upon the ruins of a pagan temple, into which St. Benedict gathered his disciples,<sup>2</sup> the earliest western monks, and from which he sent out that religious code which is more or less strictly observed to-day in all Benedictine monasteries.

Monastic establishments are subject to fluctuation in spiritual life, and the same law of deterioration which obtains in temporal kingdoms and states seems to reign in those more strictly spiritual. Hence it is not to be wondered at that the Benedictine abbeys and monasteries had departed widely from the ideal of their founder by the end of the tenth century. Though reforms<sup>3</sup> were attempted earlier than that which is known as the "Reform of Cluny," this was the most pronounced of the early movements to recover and practice again the Rule of St. Benedict. In the year 910<sup>4</sup> was built in the Territory of Macon, in France, the monastery to which was given the name of Cluny. The Duke of Aquitaine, its founder, called the pious Bernon, formerly of the monastery of Gignon, to be its first Abbot.<sup>5</sup> At his death he was succeeded by Odon, who is commonly, though incorrectly, called the founder of Cluny. The order was recognized by Pope Agapet II., in 946. Cluny now became the mother house of many monasteries which followed the more rigid rule established there, and in the twelfth century is said to have had over two thousand affiliated houses in France, Germany, Italy, England, in Spain and in the Orient.<sup>6</sup> Abbot Odon must

<sup>1</sup> An excellent edition of the Holy Rule, has been edited by a monk of St. Benedict's Abbey, Fort Augustus.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that one of the two earliest followers of St. Benedict was named Placidus, a name which has always been a favorite monastic one, and is to-day borne by a monk of New Melleray.

<sup>3</sup> Notably that of St. Benoit d'Aniane in the eighth and ninth centuries. See *Helyot, Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*, Tom. V., p. 139. (Paris, 1715-21.)

<sup>4</sup> *Helyot, Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> *Helyot, Ibid.*, p. 186. See also, *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup> *Helyot, Ibid.*, p. 187.

however be regarded, if not as the absolute founder of Cluny, yet as the great reformer who made Cluny for a hundred years the head and front of monastic establishments upon the continent. The relaxation of morals in the monasteries which made reform desirable may be judged from the following quotation: "Après que ce vénéré Père (Odon) eut senti la nécessité d'astreindre les communautés à l'exacte observation de la Règle, et qu'il eut commencé sa réforme, certains moines, outrés de voir leur Frères laver et graisser eux-mêmes leurs chaussures, s'employer à de vils ouvrages et, soigneux de garder le silence, remplacer au besoin la parole par des signes, firent éclater scandaleusement et mal à propos leur mauvaise humeur et leur colère. 'Misérables s'écriaient-ils, que faites-vous la? Quelle est la loi, quel est l'ordre qui vous oblige à des travaux si bas et si serviles? Où donc, s'il vous plaît, l'Écriture vous prescrit-elle de substituer les mains à la langue? N'est-il pas manifeste que vous faites injure au Créateur lui-même, lorsque, abandonnant l'usage naturel de la voix et de la parole, vous remuez vos doigts comme des insenses?' " <sup>1</sup>

The Cluniacs themselves became less spiritual, and there succeeded a variety of reforms which made the twelfth century illustrious in the annals of the monastic orders. These reforms, in various parts of France, and at first sporadic, finally crystallized in the great order of Cîteaux, which during the century became, under the leadership of St. Bernard, the most illustrious in Europe, and of which the Trappists are one of the most remarkable and vigorous branches.

#### CITEAUX.

Among the abbeys probably affiliated to the order of Cluny was that of Molesme, which lay only a little distance from the mother house, in the forest from which it took its name, in the diocese of Langres and Duchy of Burgundy. This house had

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<sup>1</sup> *Le Petit et le Grand Exorde de Cîteaux*, p. 56. (Imprimerie de la Grande-Trappe, 1884.)



been dedicated in the year 1075.<sup>1</sup> This monastery under the guidance of Robert carried out to the letter the rule of St. Benedict. The monastery soon became rich and with riches came a natural relaxation and degeneracy. This led directly to the founding of Citeaux, for Abbot Robert finding a large number of the monks opposed to his strictness, and being unwilling to coerce them, determined to lead out to a new foundation those who were more spiritually minded and who, with him, wished to follow closely the original constitution of St. Benedict.

Early then in the year 1098, a little band of Benedictine monks, twenty-one in number, including the Abbot, Prior and Sub-Prior, were seen winding from the abbey gateway of Molesme.<sup>2</sup> Such was the beginning of that reform which resulted in the establishment of the great order of the Cistercians. This was one of those sporadic movements towards reform of which I have spoken, but one which was to result in great and organized action, the others being merely tentative. It is a general principle that efforts to a great end may manifest themselves in many ways, but that in the supreme struggle even the slightest effort may become of world-wide importance. The struggle for a return to the primeval rule had manifested itself in the establishment of the other orders, it was to conquer in the seemingly insignificant progress of twenty-one monks from the gateway of Molesme, in the year 1098.

They journeyed on until they arrived at the forest of Citeaux in the diocese of Chalons.

This lonely and desolate place seemed well fitted for monastic seclusion, and here the new abbey was inaugurated and Robert received the pastoral staff from the hands of the Bishop of Chalons. It is important to observe that from the beginning Cistercian monasteries were exempted from episco-

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<sup>1</sup> *A Concise History of the Cistercian Order*, p. 54. By a Cistercian Monk. (London, 1852.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

pal jurisdiction,<sup>1</sup> and this independence was confirmed by successive bulls of the Pontiffs.<sup>2</sup> The first bull is dated the 27th of April, 1100, and was issued by Paschal II.<sup>3</sup>

Several important changes mark the establishment of this Order—changes which greatly affected the monastic discipline.

*First.* The regulation of the diet. All dishes which opposed the purity of the rule as the early monks had interpreted it were banished from the refectory. From the fourteenth of September until Easter they partook of a single meal—that which St. Benedict permitted—and it consisted of a pound of the convent bread and two sorts of vegetables. This meal was taken in the afternoon, after rising at two in the morning and spending the most of the day in agricultural labors. During the rest of the year a similar meal was permitted in the evening, consisting of one-third of a pound of bread and of vegetables.

*Second.* They interpreted the following extract from the sixty-sixth chapter of St. Benedict's Rule much more rigidly than had been the custom:

"The monastery ought, if possible, to be so constituted that all things necessary, such as water, a mill, a garden, and the various workshops may be contained within it; so that there may be no need for the monks to go abroad."<sup>4</sup>

The interpretation given to this at Cîteaux precluded the possession of large estates which they did not cultivate themselves, but let out to tenants. It involved hard manual labor upon the part of the monks, but, as the community was frequently too small to permit the cultivation of their property by their own hands, how was the observance of the rule to be assured? The answer to this serious question was found in the institution of lay brethren. This, though it existed in

<sup>1</sup> *Privilèges de l'Ordre de Cîteaux.* (Paris 1713).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *A Concise History of the Cistercian Order*, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *The Rule of St. Benedict*, pp. 194-5. (Burns & Oates. London, 1886.)

the Benedictine Order, took a definite and systematic shape at the beginning of the Cistercian Order. The monks labored in the close neighborhood of the monastery, the lay brethren were permitted to dwell on the lonely farms around it, and became the tailors, shoemakers and blacksmiths of the community. But although the lay brethren were usually, though not always, of the more ignorant class they were treated with the greatest consideration, and by a special law of the Order, partook of all spiritual advantages. Indeed they made their vows in the presence of the Abbot and were monks in all but name. It is evident that in a rude age when distinctions in rank were so great and almost impassable, this institution of lay-brethren ennobled the cultivator of the soil and placed the nobleman and the peasant on the same level. Manual labor, therefore, and the institution of lay-brethren constituted an important part of the reforms of Citeaux.

*Third.* As regards the dress. The color of the dress or the greater part of it was changed. For dark brown was substituted white in all the garments except the scapular, which remained dark as before. It is difficult to discover the true reasons for the change, but the following one is often given, *i. e.*, that as all Cistercian monasteries are specially dedicated to the Virgin, so the white garments are symbolical of her purity. A second reason sometimes given is that the dress of the peasants of the country was made of a coarse gray cloth, and so they supposed this to be marked out for them by the rule. The former of the two reasons seems the more likely, but, however that may be, the Order has adopted the white dress with the exception of the scapular. It is supposed that this was left dark to remind the wearers and the world that they were not only monks of Citeaux, but children of St. Benedict.

*Fourth.* The rule of silence. The Rule of St. Benedict speaks as follows: "On account of the importance of silence let leave to speak be seldom granted even to perfect disciples, although their conversation be good and holy and tending to

edification.”<sup>1</sup> “The greatest silence must be kept at table so that no whispering may be heard there, or any voice except that of him who readeth, and whatever is necessary for food and drink let the brethren so minister to each other that no one need to ask for anything, but should anything be wanted, let it be asked for by a sign rather than by the voice.”<sup>2</sup> “Everyone, then, being assembled, let them say Compline, and when that is finished, let none be allowed to speak to any one, and if any one be found to evade this rule of silence, let him be subjected to severe punishment; unless the presence of guests should make it necessary, or the Abbot should chance to give any command.”<sup>3</sup>

These, which are but three of the seven directions concerning silence, are sufficient to indicate the purpose of St. Benedict. Abbot Alberic, and notably Abbot Stephen, the second and third Superiors of Cîteaux, impressed upon their Religious the necessity of conforming in this respect to the manifest intentions of St. Benedict, and silence became a distinctive mark of the Order. “The practice of silence sanctifies the whole Cistercian Order.”<sup>4</sup>

A change in the color of the dress, the custom of menial and manual labor and the consequent development of the system of lay brethren, the rule of silence, and the restriction of the diet are the principal characteristics of the reform of Cîteaux, and as these are all special marks of the development of the Cistercian Trappists it has been thought best to emphasize them as distinctive early marks of reform. The observances of the monks of Cîteaux were ascetic in the extreme. Early rising, silence, fasting—all these were carried by Abbot Alberic, the second Abbot, to an extreme which

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<sup>1</sup> *The Rule of St. Benedict*, pp. 43-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 117-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 127-18.

<sup>4</sup> *De Rancé. A Treatise on the Sanctity and the Duties of the Monastic State*. Translated into English by a Religious of the Abbey of Melleray-La Trappe. Vol. II., p. 115. (Richard Grace, Dublin, 1830.) The copy consulted is from library of Mt. Melleray, Ireland.

overshadows the rigidity and austerity of the Trappists of to-day, and the changes which have been noted above were formulated by him into ordinances, with the approbation of Rome, the Order having been, as has been mentioned, authorized in 1100.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of Clairvaux by St. Bernard,<sup>2</sup> who led out a contingent from Citeaux, and the swift and brilliant development of the Order are too well known to require any special notice, and we pass to a brief notice of the other Orders with which La Trappe was at first affiliated.

#### FONTREVAULT. SAVIGNI.

Before St. Bernard's time there were "other Prophets in Israel." The earliest of these reformers was Robert d'Abisel, who first led the life of an Anchorite in Anjou. He had many followers, but was obliged to leave them to preach the Crusade by the order of Pope Urban II. Later, in the year 1099, he retired to a place upon the confines of Anjou and Poitou called *Fontrevault*, and began the building of those cells or cabins which finally became the monastery of Fontrevault, and the Order was recognized by Pope Paschal II., in the year 1106. The founder of Fontrevault found it necessary to detach from his original following a number of his disciples, and they were sent forth under the control of three of his most trusted monks to different places in France. The one which concerns the Trappist Order was the colony led out by Vital de Mortain into Normandy, where was founded in the year 1112 the Abbey of Savigni. This abbey took its name from a forest into which Vital had led some of his followers as early as 1105. The first monastic home of the Order of Savigni was simply the ruins of an old chateau belonging to Raoul de Fougères, who kindly granted it to the homeless monks. This act of donation was confirmed by Henry I. of England, and later in the same year by Pope Paschal II. Vital gave to the monks of his monastery the

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ratisbonne, Life of St. Bernard.* (1886.)

Rule of St. Benedict, and added some particular constitutions. The number of monks increased greatly and Savigni became one of the most celebrated monasteries of France.<sup>1</sup> Not only was Savigni itself illustrious, but many abbeys and monasteries followed its rule and became dependent upon it. Amongst others was the Abbey of La Trappe.

Thus upon both sides of France, in Burgundy and in Normandy, Anjou and Perche, was displayed the same spirit of reform. But while Fontevault and Savigni never became so illustrious as Cîteaux, there was affiliated to them, and later to Cîteaux, the monastery of La Grande Trappe, the ancestress of New Melleray and to-day the mother house of the Trappists.

#### THE ABBEY OF LA GRANDE TRAPPE.

It must not be supposed that the abbey which has become famous as the mother house of the Trappists was synchronous in foundation with that strict branch of the Cistercians to which it has given a name, in this case the monastery christened the Order; not the Order the monastery.

In the year 1122<sup>2</sup> Rotrou, Count of Perche, founded an abbey which he called "L'Abbaye de Nôtre-Dame de la Maison-Dieu de la Trappe." The church was consecrated by Robert the Archbishop of Rouen, assisted by Raoul the Bishop of Evreux and Silvestre the Bishop of Séez,<sup>3</sup> in the time of the fifth abbot, William, in the year 1280. The abbey at its foundation in 1122 was affiliated with the order of Fontevault,<sup>4</sup> which was recognized by Pope Paschal II. in 1106, and received a still further recognition in a bull of the same Pope seven years later. In the abbey of Fonte-

<sup>1</sup> Helyot, *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*. Tom. VI., p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Felibien, *Description de l'Abbaye de la Trappe*, pp. 10 et seq. (Paris, 1671.) The date given by Felibien is 1140, which is incorrect, although it is repeated in Helyot, who relied on Felibien. The accepted date among the Trappists is 1122.

<sup>3</sup> Helyot, *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Edouard, *Fontevault et ses Monuments*, etc. (1875.)

vault, though now fallen to ruin, may still be seen the effigies of Henry II. and Richard I. of England, and until the time of the French Revolution the French princesses were accustomed to be sent thither for their education. To this Order, illustrious even then, the new Abbey of La Trappe was first affiliated, but in the year 1148, under the guidance of the fourth abbot, it had become Cistercian, and through the efforts of St. Bernard himself became one of the many monasteries closely connected with Cîteaux.

At this time the Cistercian Order, which originated in the reform of Cîteaux (Cistercium), had risen to great splendor under the guidance of St. Bernard, and attracted to itself and to St. Bernard's Abbey of Clairvaux, rendered so illustrious by its founder, the greater part of those monasteries which with the decadence of the Benedictines felt the need of a newer spiritual life. The affiliation then of the Abbey of La Trappe, and its reduction beneath the rule of Cîteaux, was only a single instance of a movement which became almost universal through France and through Europe, and which in turn manifested the same decadence which had led to its inception.

The surrounding country is rich in historical association. Close at hand is Bellême from whose ancient castle the family of Robert so famous in the annals of England and of Normandy derived its name. This uneasy baron was engaged in a serious controversy with Rotrou, Count of Perche, presumably the same who founded the abbey, in 1122. The fact that there was war between Robert and Rotrou is not strange, for the former, surnamed *Le Diable*, was usually at war with his neighbors, but it is rather curious that his antagonist in this instance, Rotrou, should have immortalized his name by the foundation of La Trappe, while Robert remains a type of the worst features of feudalism. At the present day the "site of the true castle of Bellême may easily be distinguished from the present fortress."<sup>1</sup> It "stands quite apart from the

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<sup>1</sup> *Freeman, The Reign of William Rufus*, Vol. I., p. 218, note.

hill on which the town and the later castle stand, being cut off from it by art. The chapel is but little altered, and has a crypt, the way down to which reminds one of Saint Zeno and other Italian churches."<sup>1</sup>

Close at hand is Fontrevault, already referred to, and, just across the frontier in Maine and in Normandy, every rood of ground brings up recollections of the days when Robert of Bellême defied the power of the Norman Dukes, or when Helias, the "blameless Knight" of Maine fought bravely, though vainly, against the mighty masters of England and of Normandy. In their old age and calmer days the barons of that time were wont to lull their consciences by the foundation and endowment of some religious house, and it is probable that Rotrou in his declining years thought to make the establishment of La Trappe the condoning good deed of his life.<sup>2</sup> In the midst then of a country which bears even to-day upon its face the scars of the contests engendered by feudalism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and at an era when private war was the key-note of the age, arose the walls and gardens which afterwards beheld the inception and the development of the strictest order of western monasticism, and which have handed on a name which is synonymous with the most profoundly self-denying of all monastic names, that of La Trappe.

The history of the Abbey from 1240 to 1662 is not unlike that of many others. For many years it was celebrated for the eminent virtue of its abbots and its monks. In particular were the miracles and the holiness of Adam, one of its earliest abbots renowned, and for two hundred years after its foundation it was so esteemed by princes and by popes that four or five bulls of the Pontiffs are to be found, addressed to the monks of La Trappe, confirming and approving the privi-

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<sup>1</sup> *Freeman, The Reign of William Rufus, Vol. I.*

<sup>2</sup> Rotrou is said to have founded La Trappe in thanksgiving for his preservation from shipwreck in a voyage between Normandy and England. The roof of the monastery was shaped like an inverted keel. *Concise History of the Cistercian Order*, p. 142.



leges conferred by their predecessor.<sup>1</sup> Like many other houses of the Cistercians, following the melancholy course which seems to be characteristic of all religious orders, the monks of La Trappe at last abandoned their traditions, and neglected the regular observance of the stricter rule which had been established by St. Bernard. In addition to the general causes for the decadence of monastic authority, some special ones existed in France, and these undoubtedly affected the house of La Trappe. In the fourteenth century the power of the church had been dealt a serious blow by the exile of the Popes to Avignon. This, in whatever manner it may have acted generally upon the European estimate of their authority, had little effect in France, save in exalting the Gallican church in its own esteem, and, by a nearer acquaintance with Avignon and its rulers, lowering the ideal of Papal holiness. But another factor was much more potent than the "Babylonian Captivity" in ministering to the decay of monastic purity in France. This was the "One Hundred Years' War." Placed upon the borderland between what was France and what, though French, was ruled by Englishmen, flung into the midst of contests in which they had no interested part, save as liege subjects of their own monarch, the monks of La Trappe insensibly became partisan. Perche is near enough to Paris and near enough to Normandy to have been long in dispute between the two rival powers, and the noise made by Tours and Poitiers penetrated even to the quiet of the cloister. The abbey was sacked again and again by the English. From the major part of the border monasteries religion fled, and attempted to find refuge in those parts of France which were farther removed from the ravages of war, but the monks of La Trappe did not wish to quit their solitude, and by fasting and daily labor were able to subsist, though meagrely. At length, however, the frequent returns of the English plunderers, who repeatedly relieved them of whatever they had amassed in the brief intervals of peace,

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<sup>1</sup> *Helyot, Histoire des Ordres Monastiques.* Tom. VI., p. 2.

constrained them to separate, and they did not return until the war was finished.<sup>1</sup> Absence from the monastery and its restraints, and the corruption of the world into which they had been forced, had produced a total change in their views of the religious life, and in their views of the rigid rule of Cîteaux. At their return, therefore, it is not astonishing to learn they displayed a quite different mental and moral attitude from that which had characterized them in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

To the general degradation of religious houses there had then contributed the causes above mentioned, and a still severer blow was administered by a system which was recognized by both Pontiff and King.

This was the system of *Commendam*. Broadly speaking, a living given in Commendam was one entrusted to the care of the holder until a proper person was supplied. In the special case of monastic establishments it consisted in the appointment of seculars to the headship (or other official position) of Orders to which the incumbent did not belong, and to whose rules and requirements, whether of mode of life or of dress, he was under no obligation to conform. It is perfectly evident that this custom, which may have been founded in necessity or wisdom, and was intended to supply for the interim places which could not on the instant of their vacancy be filled with proper incumbents, was liable to grave abuses. The ecclesiastical history of the reigns of Henry III. and Edward III., of England, abundantly illustrates this, and in France the custom became still more degraded from its original intent, inasmuch as the monarchs were wont to fill these vacancies without much reference to Rome. La Trappe long held out against the imposition of an abbot not elected by the members of the abbey establishment, but in the year 1526, Francis I. commanded the monks to receive Jean du Bellai as Abbé Commendataire. The execution of this edict the monks resisted and for a number of years continued to elect, as was

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<sup>1</sup> Helyot, *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*. Tom. VI., p. 2.

their privilege, their own abbots, while the papal curia attempted to uphold them in their contest for independence.<sup>1</sup> But finally they were compelled to yield to the King and to accept Jean du Bellai (afterwards Cardinal) as their Abbot in Commendam. At once the sad effect of the system was manifest in La Trappe. As there was no resident Abbot the monks did as they pleased, and soon became the scandal of the surrounding country.<sup>2</sup>

Temporal ruin followed swiftly upon the decadence of spiritual life. The abbey itself fell into such decay that only six or seven monks could be lodged therein, and it became the abiding-place of the servitors and of their families only. The community life had disappeared, and the members of it met only for the chase or other diversions.<sup>3</sup> Such was the unhappy condition of La Trappe in the middle of the seventeenth century.

#### THE REVIVAL AND DE RANCE.

The reformation of La Trappe, and the introduction into this abbey of the rigid observances known to this day as Trappist, were due to the efforts of Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, Abbé in Commendam. To rightly understand how an abbot appointed in accordance with the pernicious system of Commendam could have accomplished so astonishing a work, it will be necessary to trace the history of his life in some detail.

According to Helyot,<sup>4</sup> the reforming abbot was the son of Denis le Bouthillier, Seigneur de Rancé, Secretary of "Commendams" under the regency of Marie de Medicis, and a counsellor of State, thus occupying a position of dignity and influence. Armand Jean was born in 1626, and, as a second son, was destined to enter the semi-religious order of the

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<sup>1</sup> Helyot, *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*. Tom. VI., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Helyot, *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Helyot, *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Helyot, *Ibid.*

Knights of Malta. The death of his older brother changed his fortunes so that instead of becoming a monk militant, all the benefices in commendam which had been conferred upon and intended for his brother were transferred to him. The position of his father rendered it easy to provide for his future, and he became, while still a child, a Canon of Nôtre Dame de Paris, Abbé de la Trappe, Abbé de Nôtre Dame du Val and of St. Symphorian of Beauvais and Prior of Boulogne, near Chambord.<sup>1</sup> These and other titular dignities were conferred upon him before he was more than twelve years old, and from these he derived (even at that age) a revenue of about twenty thousand francs.

The change in his worldly prospects did not cause De Rancé to neglect his studies. His father had already carefully provided him with tutors in the Italian and Greek languages, and his destiny to the ecclesiastical state seemed rather an incentive to toil. At the age of twelve years<sup>2</sup> he is said to have given to the world a new edition of the poems of Anacreon accompanied by a commentary. This work was greatly admired by the scholars of the day, and was soon followed by a French translation of the poet. This instance of precocity, though unusual, is not exactly alone in history, and we are compelled to believe that at twelve or thirteen years of age De Rancé was already an accomplished Greek scholar and a not insignificant critic. Modern scepticism may hesitate to accept evidence of such early distinction in learning, but the life of De Rancé testifies to his remarkable power of mind and will, and the testimony upon which this statement rests is not easily to be controverted, and is generally accepted. He studied theology after having completed his course in the College d'Harcourt, and at the age of twenty-one received his licentiate's degree. Launched therefore upon the world with every favor of fortune, De Rancé's course for some years was only what might have been

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<sup>1</sup> *Helyot, Histoire des Ordres Monastiques.* Tom. VI., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Helyot, Ibid.*

expected in that age. His manners were agreeable, he was the favorite of society, his ecclesiastical state sat upon him with the same grace and elegance which characterized the fashion of his dress,<sup>1</sup> and he became the idol of the world in which he lived and of which he was one of the most brilliant ornaments. Amid all the license of the time he preserved a comparative purity, and, although he mingled amid the gayest circles, was by no means one of the profligate Abbés in Commendam with which the age was afflicted. Nevertheless his life was not such as we associate to-day with the term *priest*, yet this did not prevent him from receiving holy orders at the hands of his uncle the Archbishop of Tours<sup>2</sup> in the year 1651, and the ring and bonnet of Doctor were conferred three years later.

About this time De Rancé was staying with several friends at his chateau of Veret, and the gaiety of his disposition may be illustrated by the story which is told, that, after a night of festivity, they all determined to embark upon a life of adventure in foreign countries, to travel forth by land and sea, and go wherever the "wind should carry them." This Quixotic scheme was not accomplished, but is not uninteresting as indicating the manners of the age, and the freedom which was felt by "Abbés in Commendam."<sup>3</sup> His life then up to the

<sup>1</sup> *Chateaubriand. Vie de Rancé.*

"He wore a light coat of beautiful violet-colored cloth. His hair hung in long curls down his back and shoulders. He wore two emeralds at the joining of his ruffles, and a large and rich diamond ring upon his finger. When indulging the pleasures of the chase in the country, he usually laid aside every mark of his profession; wore a sword, and had two pistols in his holsters. His dress was fawn-colored, and he used to wear a black cravat embroidered with gold. In the more serious society which he was sometimes forced to meet, he thought himself very clerical indeed, when he put on a black velvet coat with buttons of gold."

(These details may be found in Chateaubriand's "Life of De Rancé," and also in a review of the same in the Dublin Review, December, 1844. In fact for a great number of details necessarily omitted in this monograph the same work may be consulted with advantage, especially as to the mode of life of Veret or Veretz, but Chateaubriand is not a reliable authority.)

<sup>2</sup> *Helyot, Histoire des Ordres Monastiques.* Tom. VI., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Helyot Ibid.*, p. 5.

age of thirty-four was that of the gay man of society, whose natural inclinations forbade indulgence of the grossest appetites, but who regulated his life in accordance with the spirit of the earlier years of the reign of Louis XIV. Suddenly this man of the great world became disillusionized, and retired from the gaieties of court to the seclusion of La Trappe. Several causes are said to have contributed to this result. One was the death of his cousin, Leon de Bouthillier de Chavigni, a man to whom he was passionately attached; a second was own narrow escape from death; a third was his natural disappointment at the reception by the court of his famous argument in behalf of the Jansenists. The latter debate, which well offered De Rancé an opportunity for showing his natural bent of mind, was held at the command of the King in the year 1655. At this general assembly of the French Clergy, convoked to discuss the Jansenist controversy, De Rancé was a delegate from the diocese of Tours. Though De Rancé's views changed afterwards so that he opposed the tenets of this school, nevertheless at this time he formed one of the minority of the Doctors of the Sorbonne who voted in favor of Arnould, the Jansenist leader. Disappointed in the view taken of his position by the court he retired to Veret before the assembly dispersed. A story is told of the sudden death (her illness being unknown to him) of Madame de Montbazon, with whom he was intimate, and of the shock which was occasioned him by discovering her body decapitated, for the coffin was too short, and it has been supposed, even by Voltaire, that this had a decided effect in shaping his future life. This story is denied by others, and the *juste milieu* seems to be that the concurrence of these two events—*i. e.*, the death of Madam de Montbazon, and De Rancé's retirement from the world—occasioned the legend.<sup>1</sup> If this story be true, it is easily to be believed that an event

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<sup>1</sup> See, in support of this story, Voltaire and La Harpe, and in contradiction of it St. Simon. It is totally denied by Maupeou, who was the first to write a biography of De Rancé. Helyot does not mention it in his chapter upon La Trappe, but the omission in his case is perhaps natural.

of such a nature would seemingly affect the course of life of a man so sensitive as De Rancé was. But the reasons first mentioned were doubtless the determining ones.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, in about 1660, just after the death of the Duke of Orleans, whose almoner he was, he made up his mind to lay down at least part of his benefices. But he consulted in regard to this serious step several of his friends of high position in the hierarchy of the church. They were the Bishops of Aleth, of Pamiers, of Châlons and of Comminges.<sup>2</sup> The counsel of the Bishop of Aleth was the least severe. "Sell," said he, "your patrimony and distribute the price of it to the poor," but he permitted him to retain his benefices. But even this seemed to De Rancé an excessive self-abnegation. He replied that his family would not permit it, but he listened with respect to the reasons of the prelate. The Bishop of Pamiers went even further, and advised him not only to sell his patrimony, but to lay down his benefices with the exception of one. This dictum was extremely distasteful to De Rancé, who argued that he could not live upon one benefice in a way befitting his condition in life. He therefore consulted at last the Bishop of Comminges, who speaking with the voice of a prelate of the early times, confirmed the advice of the Bishops of Aleth and Pamiers, and in addition avowed his belief that De Rancé should take the monastic habit and rule the monastery which he was still to hold, for, said he, "Abbeys in Commendam are contrary to the spirit of the church."<sup>3</sup> Thus De Rancé found himself on every side advised to purge himself of the sin of which he had unwittingly been guilty, and give the rest of his life as a penitential offering for his past.

This advice, coming as it did, from prelates whose opinion he respected, increased the compunctions of his conscience,

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<sup>1</sup> Another reason, perhaps more important than any of those enumerated, may have had more weight, viz., the conviction, gradually growing upon him, of a true vocation for the monastic state.

<sup>2</sup> *Helyot, Histoire des Ordres Monastiques.* Tom. VI., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Cistercian Order*, pp. 140-1.

and the effect of the two combined was, that he sold his patrimony and resigned all his benefices except that of La Trappe, this being the poorest, the most unhealthy, and the least known. The ruinous condition of La Trappe has been before referred to. "There are in existence," says Count Chateaubriand, "formal reports in writing of the lamentable condition of this monastery. That which bears the date of 1685, signed by Dominic, Abbot of Val-Richer, describes the state it was in before the reform of De Rancé. Day and night the gates were open; males and females were admitted indiscriminately to the cloister. The entrance hall was so dark and filthy that it was more like a prison than a house dedicated to God. Access was had to the several floors by a ladder placed against the walls, and the boards and joists of the floor were broken and worm-eaten in many places. The roof of the cloister had fallen in so that the least shower of rain deluged the place with water. The very pillars that supported it were bent, and as for the parlor, it had for some time been used as a stable. The refectory was such only in name. The monks and their visitors played at nine-pins or shuttlecock in it when the heat or inclemency of the weather prevented them from doing so outside. The dormitory was utterly deserted; it was tenanted at night only by birds; and the hail and the snow, the wind and the rain, passed in and out as they pleased. The brothers who should have occupied it, took up their quarters where they liked, and where they could. The church itself was not better attended to. The pavement was broken, and the stones thrown about. The very walls were crumbling to decay. The belfry threatened to come down every moment. It shook alarmingly at every ringing of the bell. When De Rancé set about reforming the monastery, it was but the ruin of a monastic establishment. The monks had dwindled down to seven. Even these were spoiled by alternations of want and plenty. When De Rancé first began to talk of reform the whole establishment was in commotion. Nothing was heard but threats of vengeance. One spoke of assassinating him, another advised



poison, while a third thought the best and safest way of getting rid of him would be to throw him into one of the lakes that surrounded the monastery."<sup>1</sup>

These menaces did not terrify De Rancé. Monks of the stricter observance were introduced into the monastery, and the seven of the older right were obliged to sign an agreement in 1662 which was confirmed by the Parliament of Paris in February of the following year. In accordance with this agreement they were permitted to remain in the monastery and conform to the new rules, or to take up their residence elsewhere, and a pension of four hundred francs was assigned to them in either case.<sup>2</sup> The monks did not accept these conditions willingly, but threats of the anger of the King prevailed, and at length De Rancé found himself the master of the Abbey of La Trappe.

But the evil which had sprung from the system of "Commendam" had not yet been repaired, and De Rancé beholding in himself the sacrifice which was required for the sins of which his family and himself had been guilty, in the many years that they had figured among the hosts of Abbots in Commendam, retired, in 1663, into the convent of Persigny, there to pass his novitiate. His profession was made in 1664,<sup>3</sup> and the abbatial benediction was pronounced in Sééz, in the monastery of St. Martin, by the Bishop of Ardah<sup>4</sup> in Ireland. Thus from being an Abbot in Commendam De Rancé became a Cistercian monk and Abbot in possession, and in formal terms, of La Trappe. Henceforth the brilliant man of the world, the gay and elegant Seigneur de Rancé, Lord of Veret and holder of a plurality of benefices, becomes Armand John, the regular Abbot of La Trappe; and, with this change the Abbot entered upon the strictest regimen of

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<sup>1</sup> Chateaubriand. *Vie de Rancé*. See also Helyot, *History des Ordres Monastiques*. Tom. VI., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Helyot, *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Felibien, *Description de la Trappe*, pp. 18-19. Helyot, *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Felibien, *Ibid*, p. 20.

the old monks of Citeaux. His fasts were so continual and so austere, that it is hard to understand how he could have endured them and yet survived. Every day he engaged in humble, even in manual labors, from which he returned exhausted. He was always the first at the Office, at prayer and at all regular exercises of the Abbey. He ordered nothing in the doing of which he did not set the example, and do himself what he prescribed to the rest. Such an example could not but induce like abstinence, and like self-denial in the monks, and the austerities of the Abbey became famous. The reforms then which were introduced by De Rancé may be summarized as follows:

1. Abstinence.
2. Perpetual Silence.
3. Manual Labor.

These regulations were not new, but they had fallen into abeyance. They are all contained in the Rule of St. Benedict, and in spasmodic activity had appeared in many ages and in many monasteries. The glory of De Rancé<sup>1</sup> is that the power of his personality and the excess of his zeal made them the distinctive characteristics of the monks of his own abbey, and that the same power stamped them upon others. His rules were not so extreme<sup>2</sup> as those of Citeaux at its earlier beginnings, they were somewhat tempered to the necessities of his age and the comparatively less physical endurance possessed by the religious of that day, but they were the most enduring of any reforms instituted in the seventeenth century and from that time to this have remained comparatively unchanged. The reasons which justified De Rancé to himself in restoring the close observance of Citeaux may be read in his own works,<sup>3</sup> and certain extracts will be found hereafter quoted in this monograph.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Appendix IV.*

<sup>2</sup> *Appendix III.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* 2 vols. Richard Grace. (Dublin, 1830.)

<sup>4</sup> *Appendix IV.*

The later history of the Abbey of La Trappe can be quickly told.

For nearly a century after De Rancé's death (1700), La Trappe continued in strict observance of the reformed rule established by him. In the year 1791 two commissioners from the administrative assembly of the department of the Orne presented themselves to Abbot Peter Olivier and enquired why the Abbey had not been suppressed in accordance with the decree of the constituent assembly as regards the religious order in France. Although the inquisitors themselves examined the monks of whom there were fifty-three choir religious and thirty-seven lay brethren, and pronounced them men of strong and decided character whose thoughts were absorbed by religion, the Executive of the Department forbade the further existence of the Abbey as such, and it was suppressed by the Assembly. The confiscation of La Trappe immediately upon the decree of the Assembly in 1790 had been postponed in view of numberless petitions in its favor, but now the blow fell, the monks were scattered, a contingent of them went to Switzerland,<sup>1</sup> the rest dispersed, the buildings of the monastery were thrown down and the fields were left uncultivated.

In 1815, after the final defeat of Napoleon, La Trappe was repurchased by the Abbot, new buildings were erected, and from that time to this it has continued to be the Mother House of the Order. "Nothing, however, exists of the La Trappe of De Rancé save the cincture of forest trees and the hills which surround the monastery; the pools which stretch their sheet of water into the forests of Perche; the abbatial lodge built by De Rancé, and a few fragments of walls."<sup>2</sup>

#### VALSAINTE, LULLWORTH.

In the canton of Fribourg, in Switzerland, exists a valley deep hidden among the mountains, and buried amid great

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<sup>1</sup> The history of these will be found under the heading "VALSAINTE, LULLWORTH," p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *A Concise History of the Cistercian Order*, p. 175.

forests and masses of overhanging rocks. Here was a deserted Carthusian Abbey which upon the petition of the exiled monks of La Trappe was given them for a home and refuge by the cantonal authorities, and within this monastery the austerities of La Trappe were again put into active operation. This for some years continued to be the only centre from which the followers of De Rancé could exert their influence, and follow the precepts of their founder. The house was raised to the dignity of an Abbey in 1794, and even before this time began the work of founding filiations in other parts of Europe—*i. e.*, in Belgium, in Spain, in Piedmont, and in Westphalia. These establishments date from 1793. But that house whose foundation directly concerns the history of New Melleray, was about to be established in England. Among other parts of the world to which the attention of the Abbot of Valsainte turned was Canada, and in 1794 Father John Baptist was ordered to proceed to London en route for the new world. Although the English laws against Catholics and religious orders were yet in force, this band of Trappists was received and protected by the English government under the pretense that they were French exiles. Arrangements were made for their voyage to Canada, but at the moment of embarkation the project was given up, and they remained in England. In March, 1796, the community entered their new monastery which had been erected mainly through the generosity of Thomas Weld near his castle of Lullworth, in the county of Dorset, and from that castle it derived its name. The sojourn of the monks in England lasted until 1817. They were warned to receive only French novices and informed that the government tolerated them only as French refugees. Both Irish and English postulants had joined the community and the Abbot not being willing to conform to this restriction which was imposed by Lord Sidmouth, petitioned Louis XVIII. for permission to return to France and restore the Cistercian order. This petition was granted. St. Susan of Lullworth was disposed of, and on the 10th of July, 1817, the community which numbered sixty persons embarked on

the government frigate *La Revanche*. This ship had been assigned for their use by the French King.

The question had arisen as to where this company of Trappists should find a home, for in France there had survived the storm of the Revolution only the monasteries of the Grande Chartreuse and of Melleray. Arrangements were finally made by which the Abbot came into possession of the latter. Its lands had been sold, like those of other monasteries, and were in the hands of different owners, but at last through purchase and through gift the most of the monastic lands, and the Abbey, were repurchased and the religious were solemnly installed in Melleray on the 7th of August, 1817.

#### MELLERAY.

The story of the founding of Melleray Abbey is as follows: In the twelfth century monks of Pontrond, a monastery of the order of Citeaux in Anjou, were sent in search of a fitting site for a new monastery. They approached the village of Moisdon in Brittany and were so coldly received by the peasants that they were forced to take refuge in a forest. Here they selected a hollow tree for their resting place for the night, and within it they found a honeycomb which supplied them with the food which the inhospitable peasants had refused. From this circumstance the name of the Abbey is said to be derived—*Mellis alvearium*, *Mellearium*, *Melleray*.<sup>1</sup> Whether this derivation be correct or not, and it seems likely enough, the monastery was founded in 1142 by Alvin Siegneur de Moisdon. Of the ancient buildings nothing remains to-day but the gate of entrance and a part of the church consecrated in 1183. Reconstructions and renovations succeeded each other at different intervals, and the main buildings date from the last century. The traditions of ecclesiastical architecture had by that time declined, and the more ancient halls

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<sup>1</sup> *Benoist, Felix. Notice sur l'Abbaye de N.-D. de La Trappe de Melleray, p. 14. (Nantes, 1884.)*

were cast down and in place of them were erected new buildings which in their general appearance resembled châteaux rather than monastic habitations. This stream of innovation was then in full flood in France, and betokened a decay not only of the true monastic rules of architecture, but also of the institution itself. Melleray therefore only followed the current, and displays in its architecture but few of the antique characteristics of the twelfth century. In 1791 it fell like other religious establishments beneath the wrath of the Constituent Assembly and was sold with all its dependencies as national property to many different purchasers.

To this monastery, reacquired as has been said by strenuous efforts, Dom Antonie, the Abbot of Lullworth, led his community. The revival of Trappist discipline in France was not lightly regarded by the Bretons or the world, and from Nantes to Melleray the monks were attended by throngs of peasants, and by the more important personages of the neighborhood. The community possessed again an Abbey, but an Abbey which had fallen into ruin and farms which had lain for years partly neglected. Besides all this, Melleray is situated in one of the poorest cantons of the department of the Loire-Inférieure. The property comprised about four hundred acres. This was divided into four farms. Three of them were let, and the fourth, around the Abbey, was reserved for the personal manual labor of the community.<sup>1</sup>

It was the cultivation of these lands by the monks which rendered the name of the Abbot, Dom Antoine,<sup>2</sup> and of Melleray, so celebrated in France, for the English system of agriculture was introduced, English agricultural instruments, unknown in France, were brought to the lands of the Abbey, and the farmers of Brittany soon improved their methods and introduced the new and improved system. More than this, a market garden was established and vegetables were sold in

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<sup>1</sup> *Benoist, Felix. Notice sur l'Abbaye de N.-D. de La Trappe de Melleray, p. 35.*

<sup>2</sup> For the life of Dom Antoine, otherwise Anne-Nicolas-Charles Saulnier de Beauregard, Doctor of Theology of the Sorbonne, see *Ibid*, p. 28, et seq.

Chateaubriant and the environs of the monastery, while an agricultural school was also established there, into which were received many pupils. The agricultural and horticultural school spread the fame of the Abbot through France, and ameliorated by its advanced methods the condition of the farmers of the neighboring departments. Until 1830 the community of Melleray lived on in temporal and spiritual prosperity and with numbers reaching at certain times, as many as two hundred. But in that year of revolution the Abbey met with a severe stroke of ill-fortune—one which led eventually to the establishment of the Abbey of New Melleray in Dubuque County, Iowa. The Abbot had long been known as a friend of the Bourbons. In 1820 he had pronounced at Nantes the funeral sermon of the Duke de Berri, who fell beneath the stroke of the assassin. In 1829 the Duchess de Berri had visited the abbey, and had been received with the honor befitting her rank, and then accorded to royal princesses by the customs of the Trappists. These causes were reinforced by the reception into the community of many Irish and English monks and by the envy for the agricultural prosperity of Melleray which was felt by the surrounding country. Hence when Charles X. was driven from his throne, and the citizen-King, Louis Phillippe, entered the Tuilleries, it was not wonderful that private hatred, and public suspicion should be directed against the Trappists of Melleray. They were accused of plotting against the new monarchy, of harboring Irishmen and Englishmen who were sturdy legitimists, and of rebelling against the new régime. This general policy against the monastic establishment of Melleray took definite shape in 1831. On the 5th of August of that year the prefect of Nantes obtained an order of arrest in accordance with which the community of Melleray was to be suppressed and dissolved. This order not having been obeyed, a detachment of soldiers in number about six hundred surrounded the Abbey on the 28th of September. Sentinels were placed at all places of egress, and the authorities assembled in the Abbot's room and declared that in virtue of an

ordinance of Napoleon the establishment of Melleray was unconstitutional.<sup>1</sup> The authorities, therefore, proclaimed that they were armed with power to dissolve the brotherhood and give passports to all its members. The true causes for this action may be found among those stated above, and the sub-prefect of Chateaubriant made himself the following statement: "One of the chief reasons which has compelled us to have recourse to these unpleasant measures, is the clamor now prevalent among good citizens and respectable members of families, that almost all the people of the neighborhood prefer the Abbey mill to their mills; that the vegetables of Melleray are bought in preference, and at a cheaper rate than from the ordinary green-grocers, and that the leather of the monastery is in great request."<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that the legitimist sympathies of the Abbot (which were not unnatural when the reactionary policy of Charles X. as regards ecclesiastical orders, and the admission into fuller freedom of the monastic orders is taken into consideration) were of powerful weight in determining this action of the authorities. Louis Phillippe was not yet secure upon his throne—centres of rebellion against his government were to be found in many parts of France; under the new constitution the old religion had been freed from the iron hand which had restored under Charles X. the special immunities which under the Republic had been denied it—the monasteries were not unlikely to be centres of quiet but effectual protest against the dethronement of a King who was emphatically a lover of monks. Hence when the extreme loyalty of the Abbot to the elder branch of Bourbon had been displayed by his funeral sermon over the Duke of Berri, and by his royal reception of the Duchess, even slight signs of dissatisfaction with the new reign would be magnified by the new prefects into serious offenses, and in fact into treason. Advantage was taken of the old edicts about religious houses—edicts which had been superseded

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<sup>1</sup> *Benoist, Félix. Notice sur l'Abbaye de N.-D. de La Trappe de Melleray*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Concise History of the Cistercian Order*, pp. 225-6.



since the Restoration—and a shadow of legal form was in this way given to the proceedings.

But the revised Charter<sup>1</sup> granted liberty of worship to every one, and the defense of the Abbot rested upon this ground. A second investment of Melleray in October resulted in the giving of passports to forty five French monks, and the determination upon the part of the Abbot to put off the religious habit as a matter of prudence until he could examine the rights which the Charter conferred upon him, and then to stand upon them.

But the principle cause of trouble was the presence in Melleray of a large number of British Trappists. Fear of England made it embarrassing for the government to treat them otherwise than as Englishmen, and, the assistance of the Consul having been invoked, they were conveyed in free omnibuses on the 19th of November to a steam vessel which carried them down the sound to the Hebe, a sloop of war then lying at St. Nazaire. At length after some delay they sailed on the 28th of November and arrived in Cork, their destination, on the 1st of December. These British subjects were most of them Irishmen, and at their own desire they were conveyed to Ireland. Such in brief was the history of the expulsion from France, in 1831, of the men who were to found Mt. Melleray. The story of Melleray Abbey from that time is briefly as follows: There were left in the monastery only a few monks, its industries were ruined, and for some years it remained in a state of forced inactivity and of uncertainty. At length it revived, and to-day is one of four first monasteries of the order, acknowledging, as do all the Trappist houses, La Grande Trappe as its superior and mother house.

#### MT. MELLERAY.<sup>2</sup>

Before the storm had burst upon the Trappists of Melleray,

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<sup>1</sup> Charter granted by Louis Phillippe.

<sup>2</sup> The chief sources for the history of the Abbey are manuscripts furnished to the author by the Reverend Father Superior and by the Reverend Father Placid of New Melleray. Some details will be found, but very meagre ones, in the History of the Cistercian Order, quoted above.

as just recounted,<sup>1</sup> Dom Antoine, foreseeing a tempest, had sent to Ireland in 1830 Father Vincent Ryan and Brothers Malachy and Moses with the purpose of selecting a place of refuge. A foundation of Trappists had been solicited by the Archbishop of Dublin and the following letter is a copy of the reply sent to the Archbishop by Dom Antoine.

"MY LORD:

"The events which, during some months back, have been passing in France, are not less known to your Grace than to myself. Those which still threaten this unhappy kingdom, and which are directed more against religion than against the monarch, have made me think seriously before God, how I may preserve the precious and interesting colony which it hath pleased His goodness, notwithstanding my incapability and unworthiness, to confide to my care. I have cast a glance through Europe, and I tremble. For everywhere I behold commotion, insurrection, discord. Ireland appears to me, at this moment, the most secure from any revolutionary movement. The great majority of its inhabitants are Catholic; their attachment to the religion of their forefathers is proverbial. Emancipation,<sup>2</sup> which they so long and so justly demanded, is now granted, and has already become the best surety of peace, in a country the spiritual wants of which are supplied by prelates whose zeal equals their piety. But the decisive consideration, my Lord, is this plain fact; in a house composed at this time of a hundred and seventy members, forty of these are from Ireland. One objection alone meets and opposes me—the want of funds. The greater part of the members who have joined us, brought nothing with them but their good will. The repairs of our monastery—the purchase of the property—the support of so large a family, have entirely exhausted our feeble resources; so that we have not the means wherewith to assist our brothers in the estab-

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<sup>1</sup> Above, title "MELLERAY."

<sup>2</sup> The "Emancipation" of the Catholics in England—i. e., the repeal of the anti-Catholic laws, took place in 1829.

lishment of a foundation in a foreign land. But God, who is rich in mercy, and whose Providence has constantly watched over us, since the commotions in France, has given to us at this moment a fresh proof of His unspeakable kindness and generosity in our favour. Many pious and respectable persons of both sexes in your Grace's diocese, have offered in a most handsome manner to supply funds for the foundation of a Cistercian house in Ireland. I behold in these traits of benevolence, my Lord, the worthy descendants of those of noble minded men, who formerly adorned Ireland with so many religious asylums, and who testified a deep interest in the monks of Cîteaux—the children of St. Stephen and St. Bernard. I feel bound to respond to so generous an appeal; but that which principally confirms my resolution, is the assurance that bishops of Ireland, and more especially your Grace, will favour the undertaking by their kind sympathy and protection.

“For this reason I have sent the Reverend Father Vincent Ryan, Prior of Melleray, and Father Malachy, to lay before your Grace our present position, our designs, and the details necessary for a full explanation of the subject. I do not doubt but that, under your Grace's auspices, this institution we have in contemplation, and which is intended for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, will prosper, and bring forth abundant fruit. May our wishes, my Lord, be realized: May Ireland again present that fervour and piety which rendered her eminent even among the Catholic kingdoms of the universe! May the children of St. Bernard and of Abbé Rancé, even in these later days—days of sorrow and general defection from the faith—re-people once more your solitudes, and console the church for the losses which she daily deplures, and which seem to bring us to the borders of those unhappy times, when, as our Divine Master informs us, faith will be found no longer on the earth.”<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of a house in Ireland proved more diffi-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Cistercian Order*, pp. 221-2-3.

cult than had been anticipated, but the first step toward this end was taken by Father Vincent in the renting of a house and fifty acres of land at Rathmore in the county of Kerry, about twelve miles from Killarney. While the pioneers of the new monastery were thus occupied in Ireland, the expulsion of the Irish monks from France actually took place, and when they arrived in Cork, they were met by Father Vincent, who explained to them his needy circumstances, and stated that any of them were at liberty to seek homes elsewhere. Four or five took advantage of his permission, but the rest followed him to Rathmore. In the course of time nearly all the French exiles, not only those of Irish birth, but those of English and French extraction, were gathered to Rathmore. It was evident that a rented house of small dimensions and fifty acres of land were entirely inadequate to the carrying out of the Trappist customs, and Father Vincent bent himself to the task of obtaining a more fitting and spacious residence.

Sir Richard Keane, a Protestant gentleman, made over to Father Vincent for a nominal rent an area of six hundred acres of mountainous land, barren and unbroken, and five lay brethren were sent in 1832 to begin the task of its enclosure and cultivation. This domain was situated in the county of Waterford near the town of Cappoquin. The surrounding country gave liberally of its means and of its manual labor to aid the Trappists in the erection of their monastery, and to help them to reclaim the desert which had never known any cultivation. At first, Father Vincent and a few of the monks whom he had brought with him from Rathmore, took up their abode in a small cottage near their farm called "the cottage Bethlehem"—but on the 20th of August, 1833, the first stone of the present Abbey was laid by Sir Richard Keane in the presence of the Bishop of Waterford, a numerous body<sup>1</sup> of

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<sup>1</sup> At the laying of the corner-stone of Mt. Melleray there were present of the Trappists about twenty. Among this twenty were Father Vincent, Brothers Ambrose Byrne, and Foley of the lay brethren, and Brothers David and Francis of the choir brethren.

clergy and a concourse of people which is said to have numbered nearly twenty thousand souls. The progress of the building was however slow, and it was not until 1838 that it was inhabited by the community, and in October of the same year divine service was celebrated in the church of the monastery for the first time.

It is worth noticing, that in virtue of this first establishment of the Reformed Cistercians or Trappists in Ireland, the monastery was raised to the dignity of an Abbey, and by a brief of Pope Gregory XVI. Father Vincent was appointed a mitred Abbot. This was the first consecration of a mitred Abbot in Ireland since the Reformation, and the ceremony was celebrated on the 17th of May, 1835. The Abbey was given at the same time an independent jurisdiction, thus freeing it from dependence upon the mother house. At this time the Abbey had become the home of the greater number of the French exiles—*i. e.*, of about seventy persons.

“Mt. Melleray, the mother house of New Melleray, is situated about three and a half miles northward from Cappoquin. The Abbey cannot be seen from Cappoquin, as the woods belonging to Sir Richard Keane’s demesne conceal it from view, and, for the same reason, neither can the mountains to the rear of the Abbey be seen from the town. In fact, from the town no vestige of the celebrated Abbey of Trappists can be discerned. The town, like others of its size, is generally pretty noisy, there is an almost constant hub-bub there from morning to night, and the passing traveler sees nothing to indicate that in the near neighborhood there is a celebrated establishment of ascetics, of men living in profound solitude, entirely shut off from the busy world, observing among themselves an almost unbroken silence and devoted exclusively to their eternal interests. When the traveler has driven perhaps a mile and a half on the Clonmel road, of a sudden he is startled. In front of him is an extensive plain, not cultivated, for it is in great part covered with heather; bounding his horizon on the north is a range of mountains, the two principal heights being Knockmealdown and Knocknafolla. Quietly

seated at the foot of this latter height is the Abbey, nestling in groves of modern date. The buildings are low but very extensive. Looking down on the Abbey from the tower of the church, one might fancy himself looking down upon a village. A well kept avenue leads from the main road up to the Abbey. The first building that is seen upon this avenue is a school for the little boys of the neighborhood, and generally two choir monks are employed to teach in it. The next building is the classical seminary, having a small lawn in front. After leaving the seminary the monastery lodge is reached in two or three minutes. This lodge is really a large two-story house, having from ten to twelve large rooms. As this lodge is outside the enclosure of the monastery, women as well as men are received in it. Here two lay brethren in their brown habits are always in attendance. At every hour of the day or night they are prepared to receive guests. Men who wish to see the interior of the monastery have no difficulty in gratifying their desire, for one of the brothers shows them with great courtesy all that is worth seeing—viz: the church, chapter room, dormitory, refectory, cloisters, cemetery, sacristy, shops, garden, library, etc. Although the monks are met with in all parts of the house they never speak to visitors, they are intent on their various duties and go through them in silence. The numerous visitors never disturb them in the least, for the brother porter so manages that while the visitors are in the immediate vicinity of the brethren, they speak only in a low whisper. The brethren, though they are devoted to solitude and to seclusion and to silence, are not misanthropes, but, on the contrary, have very warm feelings for their fellow men, and hence are not disturbed when seeing them in the monastery.”<sup>1</sup>

This first foundation of Trappists in Ireland was fruitful in results. Not only did the abbey prosper, but its prosperity

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<sup>1</sup> This description of Mt. Melleray is from the manuscript, kindly given to the author of the monograph by its writer, the Rev. Father Placid, who spent many years in Mt. Melleray, and is now Sub-Prior of New Melleray.

became so great, and its condition so crowded, that in about 1835, even before the monastery was completed, a few brethren were sent to England where an Abbey was founded, though under the affiliation of Melleray, in the same year. This Abbey is called Mt. St. Bernard, and is situated in Leicestershire.

Father Vincent, in order that his monks might contribute in some way to the public good, appointed a few choir brethren to conduct a classical school attached to the monastery. This is found in the seminary above alluded to.<sup>1</sup> This establishment was successful from its inception, and is to-day a prominent school in the county of Waterford. A part of the Abbey church was given up to the use of the public, and priests were appointed to take charge of it. This arrangement also was successful, and at the present time there are ten or twelve priests of the Abbey devoted to the services of the public.

Abbot Vincent died in 1845, and to him succeeded a Superior who held office only until 1848, and was followed by Abbot Bruno, who still governs Mt. Melleray. It was in his time that the emigration to the United States occurred which resulted in the foundation of the Abbey of New Melleray in Dubuque County, Iowa.

### NEW MELLERAY.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Trappist Abbeys which have been described in the earlier portions of this monograph finds its final outcome for the State of Iowa in the existence of New Melleray. Between Monte Cassino and the monastery which rises not far from the Mississippi, the connection, though extending through centuries, is distinct and plain. Monte Cassino, Cluny, Molesme and Citeaux; Monte Cassino, Fon-

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> The sources for the history of New Melleray are, records of the Abbey, manuscripts written by the monks, and oral information kindly given the author by the Father Superior, and by Father Placid, Sub-Prior.

trevault, Savigni, La Trappe, Citeaux. The stream of monasticism which flowed from that Italian summit of the Appennines, though divided into many channels for six centuries, found its legitimate expression in the Cistercian reforms, and in that, attracted perhaps insensibly, united those monasteries of the older order which were situated on different sides of France. Citeaux becomes therefore a new point of departure, and from this La Trappe, Valsainte, St. Susan of Lullworth, Melleray, and Mt. Melleray are distinct ancestors in the pedigree of New Melleray.

We will preface the history of New Melleray with a brief description of its situation. This Abbey is situated in the State of Iowa, about twelve miles southwest of the city of Dubuque. The approach to it from the city is by the military road for ten miles, a road which unlike most American roads is macadamized. Thence for perhaps two miles the road is undulating, winding over hills, and through valleys. At the end of ten miles one turns abruptly to the right and passes into a forest. This forest is penetrated by a road which has been constructed by the monks, and which is carried on roughly laid blocks of stone across a number of deep ravines. As one plunges from the light and splendor of the summer's day into these darker recesses, the mind is well prepared for the stillness and quiet of the Abbey. Emerging from the forest road, the Abbey is seen at a little distance, and the cross crowning a gentle elevation.

As the Trappists invariably select quiet and remote situations for their monastery, so the site of New Melleray is no exception to the general rule. The immediate grounds of the Abbey are surrounded by a high, close fence, the gates of which are usually kept locked. The lodge and the house for strangers which exist in older establishments<sup>1</sup> have not yet been erected here. On the contrary, the stranger is received at a side door of the main building which opens into

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<sup>1</sup> See title MT. MELLERAY, p. 29 *supra*. Also title OTHER CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES, *infra*, p. 54.



a hall and reception room. Here he is entertained by the guest-father, in this monastery, the Sub-Prior. Hither too comes the Superior or Abbot to welcome his guests. As hospitality is one of the most ancient and valued privileges of the monks, and is enjoined upon them by the Rule of St. Benedict,<sup>1</sup> refreshment is early offered to the guests. This is sometimes brought to the reception room, but more often the guests are conducted to the strangers' refectory. The guest-father, or a lay brother who is assigned to that duty, devotes himself to the comfort and convenience of the strangers, and they are shown all objects of interest in the monastery and about it.<sup>2</sup> Should a desire be expressed to remain a night or to spend some time at the Abbey, a pleasant room is provided and the comfort of the stranger is assiduously observed. It is unnecessary to say to those familiar with the customs of foreign lands that, at departing, a sum of money, such as the visitor is able to spare, or such as he thinks is a just equivalent for his entertainment, or such as his conscience dictates, should be quietly given to the guest-father to be bestowed in charity.

The grounds immediately surrounding the monastery are laid out with much beauty. To the rear of the building extend two distinct avenues of trees resembling cloisters—the branches having been trained so as to form an arch overhead. In this secluded and silent retreat the monks may be seen walking in their brief moments of leisure. One seems to be within the nave of some great cathedral, the light dimly falling through the boughs above. These cloistral avenues are one of the chief beauties of New Melleray. Several well-kept gardens are also to be seen, and the graveyard with its simple crosses familiarizes the monks with the thought of death. Nor do they think of this as a foe. During the building of the monastery the monks resided in a wooden house which is still in existence, and is considered and used at

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<sup>1</sup> *Rule of St. Benedict*, chapter 53.

<sup>2</sup> See MT. MELLERAY, p. 29, *supra*.

present as a sort of lodge. The general dimensions and appearance of the Abbey are somewhat as follows:

The stone Abbey was first inhabited in 1875, twenty-six years after the laying of its corner-stone in 1849. This building, which is not yet finished, neither the church nor the cloister being complete, extends in the form of a partly completed cross two hundred and twelve feet in the longer arm and one hundred and twenty in the shorter. These arms are thirty-five feet wide. Within them are contained the various apartments which constitute the home of the monks. The Abbey is built of limestone. The walls are laid carefully and firmly. Not far from it on a slight elevation is the cross which indicates the neighborhood of a monastery. Upon its walls ivy is growing, and the Abbey, even since 1875, has assumed an appearance of some age and antiquity.

#### HISTORY OF NEW MELLERAY.

The Abbey of Mt. Melleray, County Waterford, Ireland, became overcrowded with members. The land was unproductive and not well adapted to the support of so large a community, and, as France was closed against them, and the Abbey of St. Bernard had already been established in England, it was thought best by Abbot Bruno to attempt the settlement of a branch of the community in America. After much deliberation Father Bernard McCaffrey and Brother Anthony Keating were chosen by Abbot Bruno as the pioneers of the movement and were instructed to select, if possible, a desirable place for a Trappist establishment in America. They left Mt. Melleray on the 25th of July, 1848, and arrived at length in New York, but they effected nothing at once. After some time they were invited by a friend in Pennsylvania to inspect a locality in Bedford County of that State, but this place did not prove satisfactory, and was therefore rejected. Soon after this decision was reached, Brother Anthony returned to Mt. Melleray, and Father Bernard determined to go

to the Trappist monastery of Gethsemane, in Nelson County, Kentucky, which had been founded in 1800. Here he was entertained kindly, but remained for some time in a sort of forced inaction. The Abbot of Mt. Melleray was not discouraged and was still determined to find a suitable place for his monks who overcrowded his monastery, and so in January, 1849, two were sent out as an advance guard. These were Father Clement Smyth and Brother Ambrose Byrne, who sailed in the steamship Sarah Sands. These were as unsuccessful as the others had been and nothing was accomplished.

An unforeseen accident however resulted in the foundation of New Melleray when the direct efforts of Father Bruno had seemed unavailing. Early in 1849 Bishop Loras, of Dubuque, who was travelling in Europe, visited the Abbey of Mt. Melleray, and expressed a strong desire to have a colony of Trappists founded in his diocese. He offered them a tract of prairie land lying about twelve miles from the city of Dubuque in a southwesterly direction. Abbot Bruno immediately determined to accept the offer if the situation was favorable, and wrote directly to Father Clement in America about the offer in Dubuque. Father Clement sent Brother Ambrose to examine the land and its location. Upon close inspection it satisfied Father Ambrose, and, considering it an eligible site for a Trappist monastery, he accepted the offer. A place, therefore, in America had been found for the second Trappist colony in the United States. The acceptance of Brother Ambrose was ratified by Abbot Bruno, and the latter immediately sailed for America. He hastened to Dubuque across a county unsupplied with good means of intercommunication, bringing with him Father James O'Gorman and some lay brethren. The names of the lay brothers were: Brothers Timothy, Joseph, Barnaby and Macarius. On the 16th of July of that same year of 1849, Abbot Bruno, of Mt. Melleray in Ireland laid the foundation of New Melleray Abbey in Dubuque County, Iowa. Seven monks were present on this occasion. Three of them were priests, viz: the Abbot Bruno, Father James O'Gorman and Father Clement Smyth. Father

O'Gorman was appointed the first Superior, and Abbot Bruno returned to Ireland.

Again, on the 10th of September, 1849, sixteen members of the Mt. Melleray establishment were sent out to New Melleray. One was a priest, viz: Father Patrick Mahon; two were choir brethren, viz: Brothers Bernard Murphy and Benedict McNevin, and sixteen were lay brothers. This detachment sailed from Liverpool for New Orleans on board the sailing ship "The Carnatic of Boston." Six of these brothers died of cholera as they came up the Mississippi, and their bodies repose at different places along its banks.

But the emigration from Mt. Melleray had not ceased. Neither the fate of their brethren, who had died upon the way, nor the long and wearisome journey could deter them, and so, on the 12th of April, 1850, a third detachment of twenty-three arrived at New Melleray. These were headed by Father Francis Walsh, who immediately became Superior. Up to this date then, the 12th of April, 1850, Mt. Melleray had sent to Dubuque between forty and fifty of its inmates. Of the last detachment twenty-two were Irishmen and one, Brother Jules, was a Frenchman. Thus, by 1850 the new Abbey had entered vigorously upon its American life, and the settlement of Trappist monks in Iowa was no longer tentative but an established fact. It may be interesting and useful to append a brief sketch of the eight Superiors<sup>1</sup> who have ruled the Abbey since 1849.

#### FATHER JAMES O'GORMAN.

Father James O'Gorman was appointed the first Superior on the 15th of July, 1849, the very day the institution, organized as a community, began its existence. It was understood from the beginning that Father James was to be only temporarily a Superior. He was to remain in office only until such

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<sup>1</sup> The technical difference between an Abbot and a Superior is that the former is elected by his monks and blessed by a Bishop. The latter is appointed by the house to which the monastery is subordinate, or, being elected by his own monks, is subordinate to the mother house.

time as another from Mt. Melleray should arrive to take his place. Upon the arrival of his successor Father James resigned his office into his hands. Father James was a remarkably eloquent man, he was in all senses of the word an excellent preacher, and he is to the present time spoken of by the people living in the neighborhood of the Abbey as the "best preacher New Melleray has yet produced." Father James was created afterwards Bishop of Nebraska, and died in Omaha in 1874.

#### FATHER FRANCIS WALSH.

This Superior, who succeeded Father James O'Gorman, and was appointed by Abbot Bruno of Mt. Melleray, resigned his position after he had held it for two years. In the year 1858 he asked for and received permission to go on missionary duty. This characteristic of Father Francis—*i. e.*, the desire to go into the world and preach the gospel—is quite unknown among the Trappists, but is a distinctive trait of the active orders of monks. It was most fully developed among the Friars, the followers of St. Francis and St. Dominic. Father Francis was a devoted priest for thirty years, and in 1888 returned to New Melleray where he still lives. His going out to discharge missionary duty was an exceptional case.

#### FATHER CLEMENT SMYTH.

Father Clement was the third Superior. Hitherto the Superiors had been appointed by the Abbot of Mt. Melleray. Now for the first time the monks were permitted to exercise their own choice. The new Superior proved to be an excellent one. He was kind, considerate, humble. A brother among brethren, he possessed the true community spirit, and in the pursuit of his ends—*i. e.*, the advancement of the monastery in repute and of the monks in holiness—he made himself all to all. There were no details of monastic life which were too trifling for him. Quietly, and indeed instinctively, he saw into everything, and with firmness or with severity, as one or the other was required by the occasion, advanced the

interests of New Melleray. After holding office for about six years he became coadjutor to Bishop Loras, of Dubuque, and, after that prelate's death, succeeded him as Bishop of the Diocese. He soon became a favorite in Dubuque through his affability, his condescension, and his unfeigned kindness of heart. That same nature which had rendered him so beloved in the monastery produced a like effect in his diocese. He was beloved in every corner of it, and died universally regretted, after a comparatively brief enjoyment of his pastoral staff, in Dubuque in 1865.

FATHER IGNATIUS FOLEY.

Father Ignatius Foley held office only part of one year. He then returned to his own monastery of Mt. Melleray, and directly after his arrival took an active part in the conduct of the classical school attached to the Abbey,<sup>1</sup> and intended chiefly for the training of ecclesiastical students. Some years later he became president of the seminary, and still holds this office. He has been very successful in filling this position, and under his care many young men have been educated who are now priests in missionary work—some in America, others in Australia.

FATHER BERNARD McCAFFREY.

Father Bernard, like Father James O'Gorman, held office only until such time as another from Mt. Melleray should come to take his place.

FATHER EPHRAIM McDONALD.

On the 25th of February, 1859, Father Ephraim took office as Superior. He had been Prior and novice-master of Mt. Melleray. Through the agency and active assistance of Father Clement, then Bishop of Dubuque, the monastery was raised to the dignity of an Abbey,<sup>2</sup> and shortly after Father

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> The technical difference between an Abbey and a monastery is that an Abbey is generally exempted from Episcopal control. That is to say, the

Ephraim was elected first Abbot<sup>1</sup> and blessed in the Cathedral of Dubuque, the sermon being preached on that occasion by the Bishop of Chicago.

Abbot Ephraim held his office for a little more than twenty-one years, and returned to Mt. Melleray in 1883. He is still living in the mother-monastery and is now in his seventy-first year. He was remarkable for his piety and austerity. He gave a considerable part of each day to private prayer; his attitude while thus engaged can hardly be forgotten by those who witnessed it. As long as his health permitted he observed the rule to the letter, taking during half the year, Sundays excepted, but one meal in the day, and that at half after two in the afternoon, having arisen at two o'clock in the morning. He took his part in the hardest and most menial field labor, and made himself all in all to his brethren. His humility was remarkable, for, although Abbot and Superior, he made everyone feel that honors and distinctions and dignities were nothing to him but burdens.

#### FATHER ALBERIC DUNLEA.

About six weeks after the resignation of Abbot Ephraim, Father Alberic became Superior of New Melleray. He had also held the office of master of novices at Mt. Melleray. He was looked upon there as a thorough Trappist, a strict observer of the rule, and his manner, naturally grave and serious, was a perpetual lesson for his novices. At New Melleray, and in his new position as Superior, he proved himself a thorough Trappist. He was full of ardor and full of zeal. He retired from office in 1889, after having governed the

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Bishop of the diocese has no inherent right to interfere in the affairs of an Abbey which are managed by its Abbot and its monks. Different regulations may exist in different cases, but as a rule an Abbey is independent.

<sup>1</sup> The Abbot in the middle ages was a most important personage, wearing the insignia of a Bishop, and entirely independent of the Bishop of the diocese in the exercise of his authority. The Abbot is elected by the monks of his Abbey and owes, as a rule, no allegiance to any superior power except, as in the case of the Trappists, to the Pope, and La Grande Trappe, the mother-house.

community almost six years. He is now Prior, or second in authority in the community.

#### FATHER LOUIS CAREW.

In September, 1889, Father Louis succeeded Father Alberic, and is the present Superior. He came from Mt. Melleray as did his predecessor. In that community he held several important offices. He was successively sub-prior, master of novices, and procurator. Even while discharging some of these community offices he took a leading part in conducting the Mt. Melleray ecclesiastical seminary. For years he taught the class in philosophy, and with success, and many of his pupils are to-day hard-working priests in many parts of the United States.

The character of Father Louis, who is now in his forty-first year, can be described in a few words. He has wonderful self-control, he is never taken by surprise. No event, however unexpected, seems to disturb his equanimity. He seems always prepared for any emergency and his temper is never ruffled. He has great force of mind, but there is no violence, no anger. He appears to take in at a glance his complicated duties as Superior, and then with intense force of mind, and free from all bitterness and violence, he accomplishes his ends without occasioning any pain to his brethren, and without any harshness of action. His self-possession, his gentleness and his firmness make his government efficient, and a light yoke on the community.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Abbey since its foundation must be viewed in the light of its spiritual and its temporal development. The establishment of a community so ascetic upon the prairies of Iowa is, in itself, a remarkable circumstance. There is but one other Trappist Abbey in the United States, that of Gethsemane, in the State of Kentucky. The reasons which

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<sup>1</sup> This brief sketch of the various Superiors of New Melleray is chiefly from MSS. furnished to the author by Reverend Father Placid of that Abbey.



induced the Abbot of Mt. Melleray to accept the offer of the Bishop of Dubuque were simple ones. The offer was the most generous which had been made, and Dubuque is, as is well known, strongly Catholic. Perhaps the early French settlers determined the religion of that part of Iowa; at any rate, the proportion of Roman Catholics in Dubuque County is far above the average in the State. The knowledge of this circumstance may have had some effect in leading Abbot Bruno to determine upon the acceptance of Bishop Loras' offer. Since the arrival of the Trappists this religious belief has spread. But it may be doubted whether, outside of the immediate vicinity of the Abbey, its influence in determining the religious views of the population of the county has been marked. There has been erected a parish church near the Abbey in which the monks preach every Sunday, and the neighboring community is very strongly of the Catholic faith, and very regular in its attendance at the services of the church. The monks have been an important factor in impressing the neighboring inhabitants with the conviction that there are some persons who are willing to devote themselves entirely to the interests of their own souls, and to the good of their neighbors. This latter duty the Trappists are eager to fulfill, and do fulfill in many ways—*i. e.*, in charity, in preaching, and in many good works. Thus, although they are commonly and justly considered a community of ascetics, it is unjust to consider them as leading a life wholly selfish in its devotion to their own spiritual welfare and future happiness alone. Trappist priests have no objection whatever to undertake the work of the sacred ministry within their monastic enclosure, but it is foreign to their vocation to go out into the world for this purpose.

They have also been of great advantage to the surrounding farmers by introducing improved methods of agriculture, and fine breeds of stock. As a horticultural and agricultural school was one of the most important features of Melleray Abbey in 1830, so, although the same completeness of equipment is not to be found here, they have kept abreast of the times,

and their stock farm has been renowned. The Cistercians have always been devoted to agricultural improvements, and the Trappists at New Melleray are no exception to the general and ancient rule. The grounds of the Abbey which are neatly kept, the avenue already mentioned, and in fact all the improvements which are to be seen in the neighborhood of the Abbey, are the work of their own hands. It has taken many years to bring these cloistral avenues to their present perfection, but they are the work of time and the labor of the monks. The gift of Bishop Loras of seven hundred acres of land was the nucleus of the estate which they now possess, and which consists of more than two thousand acres. The land is rolling and diversified with more undulations than is common in the interior of the State. Grain is raised to some extent—greatly wheat—which is nearly all used in the monastery, for bread forms a very large and important article of their food. Scarcely any of the grain is sold, for the corn and other grains besides wheat are used for the stock. They have been great stock-raisers, and their income depends greatly on this product. It is perhaps enough to say here that their stock is famous and is in good demand. A transcript from the auditor's books in the appendix will indicate the amount of their property.<sup>1</sup>

About the monastery are several gardens where all sorts of vegetables are raised, these being an important article of diet. Grapes also are to be seen growing, and from them a simple and pure wine is made, for the use of the monastery, and for visitors.

They pursue upon their estate the lives of great proprietors of land, and feel the same responsibilities for its proper improvement that is felt by lay owners of property. The lay brothers, whose hours of manual labor are more in number than those of the choir brothers, are not numerous enough to adequately cultivate all the lands, and therefore many laborers are employed, and some of the land is leased.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix V.

In a word, since the founding of the Abbey, its spiritual and temporal prosperity have been marked. Some years ago a considerable debt was incurred, from no fault of the monks. But this is now rapidly decreasing and will soon, under the able management of the present Superior, be entirely liquidated. When the debt was incurred many kind friends of the community came forward, and, along with their heart-felt sympathy, proffered substantial help. Among these kind friends there is one never to be forgotten by the inmates of the New Melleray. This is Hon. W. J. Knight of the city of Dubuque. His solicitude for the distressed community was more than paternal, his time and distinguished abilities were most unselfishly devoted to its interests, and the community feels that under God they are indebted to him for its continued existence.

The property is purely communistic property. All have the same rights to have their temporal wants supplied, but no one has any special right, no one can claim any portion of the property his own, no one can will any portion of it to another. Novices, before profession, if they choose to leave the community can take with them the property they may have brought with them, and it remains their own so long as they have not united themselves to the community irrevocably.

#### MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT OF NEW MELLERAY.

Before beginning an account of the Trappist discipline in New Melleray, and the austere observance of St. Benedict's Rule, it must be premised that the observances of Trappist monasteries differ slightly in minor details. Though all of them practice an ascetic life, the degree of asceticism varies for different reasons.

The colony which followed Dom Augustine to Valsainte in Switzerland, at the time of the French Revolution, was actuated by the conviction that the exigencies of the times, which seemed to threaten religion itself with destruction, required

the most extreme and exact, not to say exaggerated interpretation of St. Benedict's Rule, and a return to the austerities of Citeaux in their most rigid form.<sup>1</sup> These, as has been said above, went even beyond the rule laid down by De Rancé. There arose, therefore, when the Revolution was over and peace was again restored, a dispute among the Trappists of different monasteries as to whether the original rule of Citeaux or the rule of De Rancé should be followed. In order to give the highest sanction to any decision the question was carried to the Papal Curia, and by a bull of the Pope, dated October, 1834, it was provided that "with regard to fasts, prayer, and chanting in the choir they shall follow the rule of St. Benedict, or the constitutions of Abbé Rancé, according to the recognized rule of each monastery."<sup>2</sup>

By the rule of St. Benedict here mentioned is intended to be meant that rule as interpreted by the monks of Citeaux. This bull, however, was not sufficiently definite entirely and satisfactorily to solve the difficulties of the case.

But with a view to a sort of compromise, the entire number of monasteries was divided into three congregations, viz: the congregation of La Grande Trappe, following the primitive constitutions of the order of Citeaux; that of Sept-Fons, following the constitution of De Rancé; and the congregation of Belgium, following the latter rule somewhat modified.<sup>3</sup>

The Abbey of La Grande Trappe is considered the mother-house, and gives a name to the congregation to which Melleray, Mt. Melleray, and New Melleray all belong. The Abbey of New Melleray follows the more rigid observance of the old rule of Citeaux, as interpreted by Dom Augustine at the Abbey of Valsainte.

There exist two classes of the religious professed, viz: the *Choir Brothers*, and the *Lay Brothers*. The first are chosen from among men who have been well educated and have a

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<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See *Appendix I*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Appendix II*.

knowledge of the Latin tongue. To this duty they consecrate six or seven hours in the day. The remainder of their time is occupied in manual labor, in meditation, in reading alone and in prayer.

The dress of the choir brother, when in dress of ceremony, is a long and wide tunic, called the cowl, made of white woolen cloth, with flowing sleeves, and attached to it is a capouch or hood. When at work they wear a dress of white woolen upon which is fixed a black scapular with a leathern girdle.

The lay brothers, among whom are often found men of distinguished origin, who prefer from various reasons to occupy this inferior rank, are employed especially in the cultivation of the ground, and in fulfilling the various duties, more or less menial, which exist in the community. They spend the most of their time in manual labor upon days when work can be done outside of the monastery. Their dress is of brown stuff, and in place of the cowl they wear a long garment without sleeves, but with a hood. Their hair is cut close.

The use of linen is forbidden to all the religious, and they wear next the skin a shirt of coarse serge.

Besides the *choir brothers* and the *lay brothers* there are to be found in the monastery the *novices*. These are admitted provisionally to try their strength, and power of endurance of the severe austerities of the Order, as well as fitness of vocation. If, after two years' trial, they still desire it, they are admitted by vote to the number of religious professed. They then pronounce their vows for three or five years.<sup>1</sup> This ceremony is followed by the final vows which seclude them forever from the world. These novices may be either of the choir or lay brothers. Their dress differs from that of the fully professed—*i. e.*, the novices of the choir wear a white

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<sup>1</sup> *Benoist, Felix. Notice sur l'Abbaye de N.-D. de La Trappe de Melleray*, p. 87. Pope Pius IX. decreed that all Trappists, wherever they might be found, should pass two years before taking the simple vows, and after this three years more before taking the final and irrevocable ones. Feria IV. February 5, 1868.

robe, but not the cowl, their scapular and its hood is white and not black, and their girdle is of wool and not of leather.

The total number in the community is fifty-four. Of these fifteen are choir brothers, and thirty-nine are lay brothers. Six of the fifteen choir brothers are novices, and six of the lay brothers are novices. Thirteen members of the community are priests. Eleven members of the community are American born, the others are foreign by birth. It is difficult to find the exact number who in different decades have inhabited New Melleray, but in 1862 there were *forty-eight* professed members, and in 1892 there are *forty-two*. As will be easily seen this is the sum total of fifty-four minus the twelve novices. Of fully professed choir brothers there are, therefore, but nine, the balance of the fifty-four members of the community being made up of lay brothers and of novices.

The government of the Abbey is vested in the Abbot or Superior as the case may be. This officer is immediately responsible to the Vicar General of the congregation, viz., the Abbot of La Grande Trappe, then to the President General of the Cistercians who resides at Rome, and finally and ultimately to the Pope. The Abbot wears no insignia of his dignity save a cross of wood supported by a cord of violet silk, and a simple ring. But when he ministers at the altar at high ceremonials he is obliged to wear his pontifical robes and mitre.<sup>1</sup>

The Abbot enjoys no better food, no richer dress and no softer bed than the other brothers. He presides from the Abbot's seat in the chapter, he receives professions, he distributes employments and imposes penances. The well-being of the Abbey from both a spiritual and temporal point of view depends essentially upon the Abbot. In piety he is the model of the monks, and upon his business capacity depends to a great extent the prosperity of the community. His power, with the exceptions noted above, is nearly absolute, his word is law and his commands must be carried out. As the monks

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<sup>1</sup> These differ slightly from those of a Bishop.

themselves elect him, they can also propose his deposition to the proper authorities, but this exigency is almost unknown.

Next to the Abbot in dignity is the Prior, who in case of necessity takes the Abbot's place, and whose business it is to look after those matters which the Abbot is debarred from attending to on account of the multiplicity and insistence of his monastic duties. An officer called the Sub-Prior assists the Prior in his duties. The cellarer has direct charge of the temporal affairs of the Abbey, and directs the work as it is laid out by the Abbot. In larger houses there are one or more *under-cellarers*. Besides these officers there are also others whose duties are indicated by their titles, viz., the Master of Novices, the Secretary, the Master of Lay Brethren, the Guest-Father, the Physician, the Druggist, the Master of the Infirmary, and the Librarian. The Abbey, as will be easily seen, is a well organized and methodically managed institution, with a fixed and substantial basis and equipage of government.

#### DAILY LIFE AND DISCIPLINE OF NEW MELLERAY.

In order to understand the terms which must be used in speaking of the exercises of the Trappists the following explanation of the canonical divisions of the twenty-four hours will be found essential. The twenty-four hours of the day were divided by the church into seven parts, to each of which services were assigned.

- I. *Matins and Lauds*; from midnight until *Prime*, commencing about 3 A. M. (In the case of the Trappists at 2 A. M.)
- II. *Prime*; at 6 A. M.
- III. *Tierce*; at 9 A. M.
- IV. *Sext*; at 12 (or noon).
- V. *None*; at 2 or 3 P. M.
- VI. *Vespers*; at 4 P. M.
- VII. *Compline*; about 7 P. M.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *J. J. Bond, Book for Verifying Dates*, p. 312.

## I. THE CHOIR BROTHERS.

They rise at 2 A. M., and then spend two hours in prayer. From 4 to 5:30 masses are going on. At 5:30 the canonical office of *Prime* is sung, and then the chapter exercises follow. These are over about 6 o'clock. Then the brothers go to the dormitory to arrange their beds, and after that they go to the refectory for collation. After collation the choir brothers have spiritual reading or private devotion until almost 8 o'clock. At that time the community assembles in choir for the office of Tierce and Community mass. After Community mass is said, they engage in labor until 11:30, and then assemble again in choir for the office of Sext and the Angelus. At 12 o'clock work is resumed, but the priests study until 2 o'clock. At 2 the office of None is sung in choir, and immediately after the Brethren go to the refectory for dinner. The time from the end of dinner till 4:15 is given by the choir brothers to pious reading, private devotion or study. At 4:15 they assemble again in choir for Vespers, which office together with meditation lasts until 5:15. After Vespers the time is again given to the same exercises as before Vespers until 6 o'clock. From 6 o'clock until 7 the brethren are occupied with public spiritual reading and the office of Compline and night prayer, and at 7 retire to the dormitory.

## II. THE LAY BROTHERS.

The Lay Brothers spend two hours every morning in prayer and private spiritual reading. At 4 o'clock they assist at mass and serve the masses. At 5:30 they take their collation in the refectory and spend the time until nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon in manual labor. This they resume again after dinner, viz: at 3 o'clock, and leave work at a quarter before six. From 6 to 7 they join the choir brethren at the public spiritual reading and at the office of Compline and night prayers. These are the winter exercises; the summer exercises differ principally in the addition of one or two additional hours of manual labor. The summer exercises



begin at Easter and continue until the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on the 14th of September.

#### THE DAILY FOOD AND THE DORMITORY.

Nothing is more simple than the daily food of the Trappists. In New Melleray two meals are taken during the day by all, viz: one early in the morning, the second at 2:30 P. M.<sup>1</sup> The dinner consists of: 1st, a soup made of vegetables simply cooked in salted water. In this can be mingled a little milk. 2d, of a plate of rice or of vegetables generally cooked in milk. To these two courses is added a dessert of fruit either raw or cooked. Milk is not prohibited during Advent, Lent, and on fast days of the church, except Good Friday.<sup>2</sup> All then accommodate themselves to the dressing of the vegetables with salt and water only. This same prohibition during the same season extends to cheese or dessert. No fish or flesh are ever served in the refectory. Beer, wine and eggs are prohibited to those who are in good health, oil is not permitted to be used except for salad. Every day twelve ounces of excellent bread, baked in the monastery, is given to each religious, and he can always have potatoes in addition.

As a rule the Trappists drink only water. While the rule does not interdict cider, beer or wine, provided the latter is the "wine of the district," these are not often taken at New Melleray. The measure of the drink whether at breakfast or dinner is about a pint. Sometimes the water is flavored with the juice of fruits.

In the midst of the refectory is a raised chair from which during each repast one of the monks, appointed for that pur-

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<sup>1</sup> In the European monasteries the early meal is generally omitted and the first meal of the day is taken at about 11:30. A collation is then served towards evening. The exigencies of the American climate, and the habits of American life have brought about the custom of taking an early meal.

<sup>2</sup> In the French monasteries milk is prohibited during Advent, Lent and on fast days of the church.

pose, reads some passage from the Holy Scriptures, from the lives of the Saints, or other pious books. Sometimes persons well known are admitted to the refectory to eat with the monks. In this case the Abbot, after the repast, washes the hands of the guests according to an old custom. But usually guests are entertained in the strangers' refectory.

All the religious sleep in the dormitory which is a long apartment containing a hundred beds or more. These beds are arranged along one aisle which traverses the dormitory. They are separated from each other by partitions six or seven feet high, and at the entrance of each from the aisle is hung a simple curtain. The mattress is of straw, the pillow is also of straw and their covering is as light as practicable. The Trappists retire to the dormitory at 7 o'clock in winter and at 8 o'clock in summer, and recline upon their beds without undressing. They sleep in their robes, the cowl only being removed, and the shoes.

Silence is absolute among the Trappists. They speak only with the permission of the Superior. In their manual labor signs and gestures answer the lack of words, and are found to suffice. The Abbot and the Guest-Father and a few officers of the community are the only members of the community who are permitted to speak without permission. The Superior and a few of the brothers appointed to wait on seculars alone speak to outsiders. It has been said, and many suppose that when one brother passes or encounters another he says, "*Frere il faut mourir.*" This however is only a myth. No such remark is made. Indeed without such a reminder the thought of death is familiar to them, and they content themselves on meeting with gestures of affection.

#### OTHER CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES.

At the reception of strangers in all Trappist monasteries where the "regular places" exist—*i. e.*, the lodge, the guest-house, the church, etc., the following ceremonies are observed: Two religious present themselves clothed in their long white

robes, and when they have approached the visitor they prostrate themselves, and remain for some seconds immovable at his feet, with their foreheads upon the floor. They then invite the guest by a gesture to follow them and he is conducted to the church. On returning to the guest-house one of them reads a chapter of the Imitation of Christ. Then their mission is fulfilled and they retire. After this scene, which is extremely touching, the Guest-Father appears and the visitors are conducted into the monastery.

This ceremony of reception is not used at New Melleray inasmuch as the lodge, the church and the strangers' house are not yet built.

In the rule there is contained one provision which sometimes has been stigmatized as a degradation, viz: the proclamation of faults in Chapter. When the Chapter assembles, each religious acknowledges, in the presence of all, the breaches of the Rule of which he has been guilty, and each one in turn is accused of any breach of it, which he has omitted to mention, by a brother who may have observed it. In making this confession he prostrates himself upon the floor of the Chapter room, and receives in silence the reprimand of the Abbot. This ceremony occurs daily, and would seem, if anything could, to inculcate a spirit of humility.

Everything in the monastery betokens a mortification of the senses and a close regard for the old austerities of Citeaux. Thus there is no gold or silver used about the altar, except for the holy vessels, and upon the altars are no decorations. This simplicity is Cistercian, and was first introduced at Mollesme in contrast to the magnificence of the Abbey of Cluny. It is most fully practiced at New Melleray. Music with the exception of the solemn chants of the choir is completely interdicted.

There is another usage which is significant. This is the custom of feet-washing.<sup>1</sup> This is practiced especially upon

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<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary to mention the wide-spread prevalence of this custom. In the State of Iowa it exists in the Amana Society and among the Amish.

the evening of Holy Thursday when the Abbot, the Prior occupying for the nonce the Abbot's chair, bathes and dries the feet of a dozen religious, while the feet of the rest of the community are washed by two other Fathers. This ceremony of washing the feet is commemorative of our Lord's washing the feet of His disciples on Holy Thursday.

When the Trappist comes to his last hour, if his state permit, he is placed upon his straw couch and upon cinders, clothed in his full habit. Around him the brothers pray for him until he has drawn his last breath. He is buried without a coffin, his robes are his shroud, and his last resting place is the cemetery of the monastery. A simple wooden cross bearing his monastic name and the date of his death is placed above him.

It is not true, though oftentimes asserted to be true, that the Trappist digs his own grave. The story has arisen from the fact that immediately after the burial of one of them, they trace out the form of a new grave which is to be the resting place of the next who dies.

Such is a brief history of the origin of the Trappists or Reformed Cistercians who practice at New Melleray the austerities which originated at Cîteaux in 1098. Many reflections which in a strictly historical sketch would be out of place suggest themselves to every thoughtful mind. Most strongly does the tenacity of the Rule which Saint Benedict proclaimed from Monte Cassino impress itself upon one who treads the cloisters of New Melleray. It is strange in the nineteenth century and on the banks of the Mississippi, in the midst of the new and vigorous west, to see the usages of thirteen centuries ago still active and fruitful—to behold the white robe of Cîteaux and the brown scapular of Benedict, to know that within the walls of New Melleray the canonical offices of the Ancient Church are chanted, and that the community preserves the customs of mediæval times. The question cannot but present itself as to what will be the future of the Abbey. Will its members increase in number, will the Amer-

ican monk replace the one of foreign birth, will the cross which now heralds a Cistercian house be thrown down, or will it multiply itself? These questions time alone can fully answer. But like all other religious communities which seclude themselves from the world and build barriers against its stress of progress, it is not unlikely that this may find its isolation fatal, and that it may prove to be the first and last Trappist Abbey west of the Mississippi.

One feels this possible truth sadly, for the self-abnegation and the self-denial and the purity of the monks cannot but command respect even in the heart of one who cannot fully sympathize with them or their phase of religion. Their faces betoken a spiritual content. There are many of them men of education, their hearts are kind and full of love for their fellow men. If such men can command respect when secluded from the world, what could they not have accomplished if they had been part and parcel of society?

## APPENDIX I.

The following brief of Pope Gregory XVI. established the status of La Grande Trappe, and the general government of the Order in the year 1834. This decree of the Pope was made necessary by the disorders resulting from the French Revolution, and the extreme asceticism introduced into Val-sainte by Dom Augustine after the year 1791.

“Kalendis Octobris, Anno 1834. Eminentissimi et Reverendissimi, D. D. S. R. E. Cardinales, Carolus Odescalchi, Præfectus et Rector; Carolus Maria Pedicini, et Thomas Weld, a sanctissimo domino nostro Gregorio XVI. E. S. congregatione negotiis et consultationibus episcoporum, et regularium præposita spectatius deputati, quo aptius monasteria Trappensium in Gallia instituantur et virtutibus florescant; auditus episcopis singularum diæcesium in quibus eadem monasteria erecta sunt, et audito Pater Antonio ab eadem S. congregatione visitatore deputato, censuerunt ea que sequuntur decernere et statuere.

I. Monasteria omnia Trappensium in Gallia, unam congregationem constituent, quæ appellabitur congregatio monachorum Cistercensium Beatæ Mariæ de Trappa.

II. Huic moderator generalis ordinis Cistercensis præerit, et singulos abbates confirmabit.

III. In Gallia vicarius generalis habeatur omni potestate præditus ad congregationem recte administrandum.

IV. Id muneris perpetuo conjunctum erit cum abbazia antiqui monasterii Beatæ Mariæ de Trappa, ex quo Trappenses initium habuerunt; ita ut singuli illius monasterii abbates

canonice electi potestatum simul et munis vicarii generalis consequantur.

V. Quotannis vicarius generalis tum capitulum celebrabit, reliquis abbatibus vel prioribus conventualibus accitis, tum etiam singula monasteria per se vel per alium abbatem visitabit: monasterium vero Beatæ Mariæ de Trappa a quatuor abbatibus monasteriorum Melleariensis, Portus Salutis, Bellefontis et Gardiensis visitabitur.

VI. Tota congregatio regulum Sancti Benedicti et constitutiones abbatis de Rancé observabit, salvis præscriptionibus quæ hoc decreto continentur.

VII. Pareant decreto S. Ritus congregationis diei 20 Aprilis, 1822, super rituali, missali, breviario et martyrologio quibus uti debebant.

VIII. Labor manuum ordinarius æstivo tempore ultra sex horas, et ultra quatuor et dimidiam reliquo tempore non producat. Quod vero ad jejunia, preces, et cantum chori pertinet, aut S. Benedicti regulam, aut constitutiones abbatis de Rancé, ex recepto more cujusque monasterii sequantur.

IX. Quæ articulo octavo constituta sunt, ea præsides monasteriorum, moderari possunt et mitigare pro eis monachis quos ob ætatem, aut valetudinem, aut aliam justam causam, aliqua indulgentia dignos existimaverint.

X. Quamvis monasteria Trappensium a jurisdictione episcoporum exempta sunt, ea tamen ob peculiare rationes et donec aliter statuatur, jurisdictioni eorundem episcoporum subsint qui procedant tanquam apostolicæ sedis delegati.

XI. Moniales Trappenses in Gallia ad hanc congregationem pertineant, et earum monasteria a jurisdictione, episcoporum non erunt exempta. Cura tamen uniuscujusque monasterii monialium uni aut alteri-monacho proximioris monasterii committatur. Monachos autem quos idoneos ad illud munus judicaverint episcopi delegant atque approbent, et confessarios extraordinarios e clero etiam seculari, deputare poterunt.

XII. Constitutiones, quas moniales servare in posterum debebunt, judicio Sanctæ Sedis subjiciantur.

Hoc decretum S. S. D. N. Gregorius XVI. P. P. in audientia habita a D. secretario S. congregationis negotiis et consultationibus episcoporum et regularium præpositæ, hac die 3 Octobris, anno 1834, ratum in omnibus, habuit et confirmavit et servari mandavit.

CAROLUS CARD. ODESCALCHI, *Praefect.*

JOANNES ARCHIEP. EPHESINUS, *Secret.*

*Translation.*

The first day of October, 1834, their Eminences, the Most Reverend Cardinals, Odescalchi, prefect and reporter, Charles Mary Pedicini, and Thomas Weld, members of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and specially deputed by our Holy Father, Gregory XVI., to devise for the Trappist monasteries in France, a form of government, by which regularity might be more duly observed, and virtue flourish; a government founded upon the reports of the Bishops, in whose dioceses the monasteries are situated, and upon the relation of Father Anthony, appointed Visitor-General by the said congregation, have decided upon, and decreed the following regulations:

I. All the Trappist monasteries in France shall form one congregation, under the name of "The Congregation of Cistercian Monks of Our Lady of La Trappe."

II. The President-General shall preside and confirm the election of the Abbots.

III. There shall be in France a Vicar-General, vested with all necessary power for the proper government of the congregation.

IV. This office shall be perpetually attached to the ancient Abbey of our Lady of La Trappe, from which the Trappists derive their origin; so the Abbots of this monastery, canonically elected, shall have the authority and the office of Vicar-General.

V. Every year the Vicar-General shall hold a general chapter, at which all the Abbots and conventual priors shall



assist. Moreover, he shall visit, either by himself or by some other Abbot, all the monasteries of the congregation. But the Abbey of our Lady of La Trappe shall be visited by the four Abbots of Melleray, Bellefontaine, Port du Salut, and Gard.

VI. The whole congregation shall follow the Rule of St. Benedict, and the Constitutions of Abbé Rancé, save in certain regulations contained in the present decree.

VII. They shall obey the decree of the Congregation of Rites, dated the 20th of April, 1822, with respect to the Ritual, Missal, Breviary, and Martyrology, which they ought to adopt.

VIII. The ordinary manual labor shall not exceed six hours in summer, and four hours and a half the rest of the year. With regard to fasts, prayers, and chanting in the choir, they shall follow either the Rule of St. Benedict, or the Constitutions of Abbé Rancé, according to the received usage of each monastery.

IX. Superiors have power to modify and mitigate the regulations contained in Art. VIII, in favor of those religious who, they believe, are deserving of some indulgence on account of age, bad health, or some other lawful reason.

X. Although Trappist monasteries are exempt from the jurisdiction of Bishops; nevertheless, for particular reasons, and until further instruction, they shall be subject to those Bishops who are delegates of the Apostolic See.

XI. The nuns of La Trappe, in France, shall be united to this congregation, but shall not be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishops. Yet the spiritual direction of each convent shall be confided to one or two religious from the neighboring monastery. The Bishops shall choose, and approve of the religious whom they judge eligible for this employment. They have the liberty to depute, if they please, secular priests for confessors extraordinary.

XII. The Constitutions which nuns shall observe hereafter shall be submitted to the judgment of the Holy See.

Our Holy Father, Gregory XVI., at an audience obtained

by the secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, on the 3d of October, 1834, ratified and confirmed in all things, the present decree, and commanded it to be observed.

CARDINAL CHARLES ODESCALCHI, *Prefect.*  
JOHN, ARCHBISHOP OF EPHESUS, *Secretary.*

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## APPENDIX II.

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### ACTUAL CONDITION OF THE ORDER OF CITEAUX.<sup>1</sup>

L'Ordre de Citeaux a un Président Général, qui réside à Rome. C'est à lui qu'il appartient de confirmer, au nom du Saint-Siège Apostolique, les Abbés des divers Monastères.

Cet Ordre est aujourd'hui partagé en trois Observances distinctes: les Cisterciens de la Commune Observance, ceux de l'Observance de Sénanque, et les Cisterciens Réformés, vulgairement dits Trappists.

La Commune Observance compte environ vingt-cinq Monastères de Religieux et quarante-sept de Religieuses, situés en divers pays (Espagne, Italie, Autriche, Belgique, Pologne, etc.)

L'Observance de Sénanque, ou moyenne Observance, se compose des six monastères suivants:

1. Abbaye de Sénanque, Diocèse d'Avignon, Vancluse.
2. Abbaye de Lérins, Diocèse de Fréjus, Alpes-Maritimes.
3. N.-D. de Fontfroide, Diocèse Carcassonne, Aude.
4. N.-D. de Hautecombe, Diocèse de Chambéry, Savoie.
5. N.-D. de Ségriès, Diocèse de Digne, Basses-Alpes.
6. Un Monastère des femmes, au même Diocèse, sous le vocable de N.-D. des Prés.

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<sup>1</sup> *Le Petit et le Grand Exorde de Citeaux.*

Preface, pp. 411-421, (Soligni-la-Trappe. Imprimerie de la Grande Trappe, 1889).

Cette Congrégation, d'origine récente, est administrée par un Vicaire Général, qui est l'Abbé de Lérins.

L'Observance des *Cisterciens réformés* ou Trappists comprend plus de quarante Monastères d'hommes et quatorze de femmes, répartis en trois Congrégations, dont l'une, la *Congrégation de la Grande-Trappe*, suit les Constitutions primitives de l'Ordre de Cîteaux, la seconde, celle de *Sept-Fons*, les règlements de l'Abbé de Rancé, et la troisième, appelée *Congrégation de Belgique*, les mêmes règlements légèrement modifiés. Chacune de ces Congrégations est gouvernée par un Vicaire Général qui est, de droit, l'Abbé de la Grande-Trappe, pour la Congrégation qui observe les Constitutions primitives.

Outre ces trois Congrégations de la Trappe, il y a encore les Trappistes de Casamari en Italie, qui ne se rattachent à aucune d'elles, et qui possèdent les trois Maisons de Casamari, Valviscioli et Saint Dominique de Sora.

#### LISTE DE MONASTÈRES DES TROIS CONGREGATIONS CISTERCIENNES DE LA TRAPPE.

*Tous ces Monastères sont Abbayes, sauf quelques-uns  
nouvellement fondés.*

#### CONGREGATION DE LA GRANDE-TRAPPE MAISON MÈRE.

N.-D. de la Grande-Trappe, près Montagne (Orne), au Diocèse de Séez (siège du Vicaire Général de la Congrégation).

#### QUATRE PREMIERS MONASTÈRES.

N.-D. de Melleray, Bretagne (Loire-Inférieure), au Diocèse de Nantes.

N.-D. de Bellefontaine, près Cholet (Maine-et-Loire), Diocèse d'Angers.

N.-D. d'Aiguebelle, près Grignan (Drôme), Diocèse de Valence.

N.-D. de Bricquebec, au Diocèse de Coutances (Manche).

#### AUTRES MONASTÈRES DE LA MEME CONGREGATION.

N.-D. du Mont-Melleray, près Cappoquin, Comté de Waterford (Irlande).

N.-D. du Mont-Saint-Bernard, au Comté de Leicester (Angleterre).

N.-D. de Thymadeuc, Diocèse de Vannes (Morbihan).

N.-D. de Staouëli, Diocèse d'Alger (Afrique).

N.-D. de Gethsémani, au Kentucky (Etats-Unis).

N.-D. de la Nouvelle-Melleray, près Dubuque-Iowa (Etats-Unis).

N.-D. de Fontgombauld, Diocèse de Bourges (Indre).

N.-D. des Neiges, au Diocèse de Viviers (Ardèche).

Sainte-Marie du Désert, près Cadours (Haute-Garonne), au Diocèse de Toulouse.

N.-D. des Dombes, au Diocèse de Belley (Ain).

Abbaye des Trois-Fountaines, située aux Eaux Salviennes, près Rome, et dédiée aux saints martyrs Vincent et Anastase. Elle est commende. Outre l'Abbé commendataire, qui est un Cardinal, il y a un Abbé régulier.

N.-D. du Petit-Clairvaux, Nouvelle-Ecosse (Amérique).

N.-D. de Divielle, près Monfort (Landes), Diocèse d'Aire.

N.-D. d'Acey, Diocèse de Saint Claude (Jura).

N.-D. d'Igny, près d'Arcy-le-Ponsart (Marne), Diocèse de Reims.

N.-D. de Bonnecomce, Diocèse de Rodez (Aveyron).

N.-D. du Mont-Saint-Joseph par Roscréa, Comté de Tipperary (Irlande).

N.-D. du Lac, près Montréal (Canada).

N.-D. de Reichenbourg, Styrie (Autriche).

N<sup>a</sup> S<sup>a</sup> de Bellpuig, province de Lérida (Espagne).

N.-D. du Sacré-Cœur, à Akbès, par Alexandrette (Syrie).

#### MONASTÈRES DE RELIGIEUSES DE LA CONGREGATION DE LA GRANDE-TRAPPE.

N.-D. des Gardes, au Diocèse d'Angers (Maine-et-Loire).

N.-D. de Vaise, à Lyon (Rhone).

N.-D. de Maubec, Diocèse de Valence (Drôme).

N.-D. de la Cour-Pétral, près la Ferté-Vidame, au Diocèse de Chartres (Eure-et-Loir).

N.-D. de Blagnac, près Toulouse (Haute-Garonne).

N.-D. d'Espira de l'Agly, Diocèse de Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales).

N.-D. de Bonneval, près Espalion (Aveyron), au Diocèse de Rodez.

Monastère de San Vito, Colline de Turin (Italie).

N.-D. de Saint-Paul-aux-Bois, près Blérancourt, au Diocèse de Soissons (Aisne).

N.-D. de Lanouellé, au Diocèse de Nîmes (Gard).

#### CONGRÉGATION DE SEPT-FONS.

N.-D. de Saint-Lieu-Sept-Fons, près Dompierre (Allier), au Diocèse de Moulins.

N.-D. du Port-du-Salut, au Diocèse de Laval (Mayenne).

N.-D. du Mont-des-Olives (Alsace), Diocèse de Strasbourg.

N.-D. du Mont-des-Cats, Diocèse de Cambrai (Nord).

N.-D. de la Grâce-Dieu, Diocèse de Besançon (Doubs).

N.-D. de la Double, Diocèse de Périgueux (Dordogne).

N.-D. de Chambarand, près Roybon (Isère), au Diocèse de Grenoble.

N.-D. des Iles, à Wagap (Nouvelle-Calédonie).

N.-D. de Tamié (Savoie), Diocèse de Chambéry.

Monastère de Mariastern, près Banjaluca, en Bosnie (Turquie d'Europe).

N.-D. de Résica, en Croatie (Autriche).

Et deux autres Maisons, nouvellement fondées, l'une dans la province du Cap (Afrique méridionale), l'autre en Chine près Pékin.

#### MONASTÈRES DE RELIGIEUSES DE LA CONGRÉGATION DE SEPT-FONS.

N.-D. de l'Immaculée-Conception, près Laval (Mayenne).

N.-D. de la Miséricorde (Elenberg), au Diocèse de Strasbourg, en Alsace.

Saint Joseph d'Ubexy, au Diocèse de Saint-Die (Vosges).  
(Cet trois Monastères sont gouvernés par une Abbesse).

N.-D. du Sacré-Cœur, près Mâcon (Saône-et-Loire), au Diocèse d'Autun.

CONGREGATION DE BELGIQUE.

Abbaye de N.-D. de Westmalle (Province d'Anvers), au Diocèse de Malines.

Abbaye de Sainte-Sixte (Flandre-occidentale), au Diocèse de Bruges.

Abbaye de Saint-Benoît, à Achel, au Diocèse de Liège.

Abbaye de N.-D. de Scourmont, à Forges-les-Chimay Diocèse de Tournai.

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APPENDIX III.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the statement that De Rancé established a stricter discipline than the Cistercian Institute, it is entirely incorrect; and likewise that he brought back the "austere primitive institute of St. Bennet." He desired to do so, but he feared that he and his religious would not be able to support the rigorous fasts enjoined by the usages of Cîteaux, and grounded upon the rule of St. Benedict. In 1672, on the Feast of All Saints, he commenced with his community the strict winter fast of taking but one meal in the day; and this not till after none, about half-past two P. M. They continued this fast till the following Easter, 1673. When De Rancé had remarked the weakness, the exhaustion of his brethren, he trembled for their health and adopted the following mitigations: During the winter season, from the 14th of September till Easter, dinner was to be taken at twelve o'clock, except on the fasts of the church, when it was taken half an hour later. In the evening, there was a collation of two ounces of bread, with salad, milk or cheese; and on fasts of the church,

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<sup>1</sup> Consult *Les Réglemens de l'Abbaye de Notre Dame de la Trappe en Forme de Constitutions* (1690); also *Les Trappistes de l'Ordre de Cîteaux au XIX. Siècle, etc.*, par M. Casimir Gaillardin (2 vols., 1844.)

one ounce of bread. During the summer season, the dinner was taken at half-past ten A. M., and the collation at five in the evening. Compare these regulations of diet with the usages of Citeaux, or with the 41st chapter of St. Benedict's Rule, and it will be found as De Rancé himself states, that the strict observance of Citeaux was not observed at La Trappe in his time.

On Sundays and festivals a public conference was held for an hour, in which the brethren were allowed to speak upon spiritual and edifying subjects. This was undoubtedly a relaxation of the strict and perpetual silence enforced by the usages of Citeaux, at least with respect to public conversation. The choir religious had not so much manual labor under De Rancé as under St. Stephen.

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#### APPENDIX IV.

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##### OF ABSTINENCE.

<sup>1</sup>All these examples, though so interesting, will not affect you, my brethren, so sensibly, as the remembrance of the austerities practiced by the holy founders of the Cistercian Order. The plan of life laid down by our fathers at the birth of this great Order, will place the dreadful state in which you behold it at present in the clearest light; and I doubt not, that when you shall have considered the almost infinite distance that exists between the father and the children, you will exclaim with St. Bernard, "Oh! the monks of those times, and those of our unhappy days." What a difference! Those saints proposed, as we have already said, the literal observance of St. Benedict's Rule; such was their end, and they were influenced by divine inspiration; wherefore they rejected every interpretation and meaning by which the severity of

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 130-32.

that rule might be alleviated or its purity altered. This same austerity they transmitted to their successors, as an obligation to which they called the attention of their minds and hearts, and commanded them to persevere unto the last moment of life; such is the express injunction of the charter of the foundation.

Now to the end that they might live conformably to this duty, they would allow themselves no other food than pulse, herbs, roots and pottage; the sauce for which was nothing better than salt and water. Their bread was brown and coarse, they drank wine but very rarely, and it never appeared on their table without being previously mixed with water. On days of two meals their supper consisted only of plain vegetables, except during the harvest time. Eggs and fish were seldom known amongst them, except for the sick; they fasted conformably to St. Benedict's Rule, from the Exaltation of the Holy Cross to Easter, and from Whitsuntide to the middle of September on all Wednesdays and Fridays; on all fasting days of the church they abstained from milk, butter, and cheese, which abstinence they likewise observed during Lent, Advent, and all Fridays throughout the year, except during the Pascal time. The first three Fridays of Lent they deprived themselves of one of the two ordinary dishes, and the three last they had nothing but bread and water; though their labors were extremely hard, and their night watchings very long. Yet so great was their love of Jesus Christ, that their penance was very agreeable to them, and they even found pleasure and satisfaction in their sufferings.

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<sup>1</sup>But if we desire to know what the spirit of Saint Benedict is in this particular, we cannot address ourselves to more enlightened masters than the holy founders of the Cistercian Order. Like so many Esdrasses, they were chosen by God to re-establish the rule of that great saint, which was then no longer observed, and to revive his true spirit; for that end

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 141-3.



they resolved to take it in a purely literal sense, and to establish its observance according to the true end of its institution, as we have before remarked; wherefore they rejected every meaning and explication which were not conformable to its purity: they began by renouncing the use of flesh granted by the assembly of Aix-la-Chapelle; they established a rigorous and unlimited abstinence from all flesh, without distinction of quadrupeds or fowl.

It is declared in the fourth chapter of the institutes, that none but those who are very sick and infirm shall be allowed the use of flesh, within the enclosure of any monastery of the Order; which permission is also extended to servants or tradesmen, who work for hire in the monastery. This is absolute, and admits of no distinction.

This statute has been frequently renewed on several occasions, and we find it forbidden elsewhere under the pain of corporal chastisement, to all and every person of the Order, to eat flesh in any place out of the infirmary, though he should be commanded to do so by the Bishop. And it is moreover enjoined, that no Abbot on account of recent bleeding, or any such like pretext, shall presume to eat flesh, unless he is attacked with a real malady, or fit of sickness. And this is also absolute.

We find a similar prohibition in another place: behold here a summary of what it enjoins. Let the injunctions of the rule, relative to the use of flesh meat, be inviolably observed, namely, that no member of the order shall eat meat out of the infirmary, under pain of excommunication,<sup>1</sup> to be incurred, *ipso facto*, or by the very act; if the offender be an officer, he shall be deposed, nor shall he be reinstated in any charge or employment, without a permission being first obtained of the general chapter for that purpose; if he be only a private religious, he shall be deprived of the religious habit during two months for every offense; this is also absolute.

There is also a constitution of Pope Benedict the XII.,

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<sup>1</sup> Monastic, not ecclesiastical excommunication.

who having been a religious of the Cistercian Order, was perfectly well acquainted with its true spirit and observances, for he drew up the constitution of which we speak, and proposed it as a remedy against the relaxations which were introduced. He speaks thus: "Let no religious or Abbot, in future, presume to eat meat out of the common infirmary, or any food prepared with ingredients of the like nature, contrary to what has been so long established in this Order: we revoke entirely the permissions which some Abbots pretend to have obtained of the see apostolic, to use flesh meat, as privileges that produce only scandal." After which he enjoins that every time a religious, whether of the choir or of the lay character, infringes the above ordinance, by eating flesh meat, or any food prepared with it, or partaking of it, of whatsoever sort it may be, he shall be condemned to fast on bread and water three days, and moreover that he be enjoined a penance, with the regular discipline; and if the Abbot neglect to enforce these injunctions, he shall fast on bread and water, as if he himself had eaten flesh.

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<sup>1</sup>Saint Benedict, who orders that the superior should always eat with the visitors, and requires for that purpose, that there should be no separate kitchen for them, does not allow them any other food but that of the community. This is what the first religious of Cîteaux, who were animated with his spirit constantly observed. Their first constitutions, called the Book of the Usages, inform us that the brother who was appointed cook of the Abbot's kitchen was to go into the garden after the office of prime, and there gather a sufficient quantity of legumes for the Abbot and strangers, who may have come to the monastery. But nothing can better demonstrate how exact they were in this point than what passed at Clairvaux, when Pope Innocent II. came to visit that house. He was received by the monks in a manner so simple, and so religious, that his suite were no less surprised than edified. The

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 157-8.

bread, according to the author of Saint Bernard's life, instead of being made with pure white flour, was mixed, and the wine was also adulterated; vegetables appeared on the table in place of turbot, and legumes were served at every course; a dish of fish was by some chance found and laid before his Holiness, more for the purpose of being seen by the assembly than of being eaten.

Nevertheless, those holy religious did not treat their visitors according to all the rigor of the common rules, for we find by their first statutes, that the bread which was served to the strangers was white like that given to the sick; but whatever the mode observed in the reception of visitors might have been, they were careful that charity should never do any injury to regularity; every part of their lives evinced their spirit of penance, and the whole tenor of their conduct affords us as great a subject of edification as does the simplicity of their table.

Hence we must observe, my brethren, that although something of the regular austerity may be diminished in favor of strangers, and although we are to condescend to a more gentle observance in the entertainment of those who visit us than what we allow ourselves, since both charity and the example of the saints inculcate and require it, yet we ought to be guided in the practice of this indulgence by exact rules; and be convinced that there is no time, no circumstance, nor occasion, in which monks ought not to remember how much they are bound to depart from the custom and manners of the world, according to this great maxim of Saint Benedict: *that monks should be entire strangers to the ways and customs of worldlings*. But now, unfortunately, there is a strange subversion of order: when we consider that formerly the great ones of the world, princes and emperors found the condemnation of their profusion and voluptuousness in the temperance and sobriety of monks, whereas in these our times worldly people find in the abundance of the cloistral table a sufficient pretext to authorize their sensuality and love of pleasure. This is an evil which Pope Clement VIII. endeavored to remove

when he enjoined in a decretal, that if any person of distinction should come to visit monasteries, whether from a motive of piety, or from any other, they should be allowed to dine in the refectory, and be served only with the common food; and that the religious should conduct themselves on such occasions with so much propriety that religious sobriety and poverty might appear in all their simple and amiable attractions.

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#### OF PERPETUAL SILENCE.

<sup>1</sup>There can be no advantage extracted from silence in a religious community unless it be uninterruptedly observed. For conversations, though short and seldom, will be found, if allowed, equally noxious and dangerous; the moments will be carefully managed, and the brethren will soon discover the secret of saying a great deal in a little time. When they shall be forced to break off, and leave their conversations imperfect, they will not forget to finish them at the next meeting. And as it is impossible that the desire of discoursing should not increase, so they will agree on the time and place to find out the means of satisfying themselves, without consulting either the will of the superior or the rules of the house, which would be in effect the ruin of discipline and the extinction of piety.

But if silence be perpetual, the brethren will consider its observance as indispensable, the most considerable advantages shall be derived from it, and it shall appear that nothing is better calculated to maintain good order, and promote the sanctification of the cloister.

*First*, having no communication with one another, and forming none of those familiarities which almost generally produce contempt, they shall behold each other with respect, and their charity will suffer no alloy.

*Secondly*, if any should be found inclined to evil, his propensities shall be enclosed within himself, and all communication of the evil shall be prevented by the barriers of silence.

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 106-7.

*Thirdly*, no factions or murmuring parties will be ever formed amongst the brethren, such an evil not being possible when there is no communication.

*Fourthly*, the correspondence and intimacy which ought to exist between the members and the head will be more connected when not divided by any particular conversations or friendships.

*Fifthly*, the superiors will never find any opponents, when they shall desire to make new arrangements, for the preservation of good order and the perfection of the community. And though a religious might not have the same ideas, yet he will not presume to make it appear, lest he should find no one amongst the brethren who would side with him.

*Sixthly*, as the heart and interior man will find no means to diffuse and enervate its principles by vain and idle discourse, so recollection will be more uninterrupted, thoughts more pure, contemplation more sublime and lively, prayer more fervent and continual; and thus the soul will ascend to a union with God, so much the more intimate and holy, as it shall have renounced for his love all communication with men.

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<sup>1</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, silence cannot be too rigorously observed, nor can the members of a religious community be too far removed from the dangers resulting from conversation. For if they once obtain leave to speak, they will use the dangerous liberty in speaking of unlawful topics; they will transgress the bounds prescribed, if they perceive that they may speak, and entertain one another concerning things unconnected with their salvation; they will extend their conversations to everything without restriction; they will mutually unfold their thoughts, temptations, imaginations, pains and discontents; they will establish a place of refuge in each other's breasts against future wants and affairs; they will link in the bonds of a false and particular charity, which is never constructed but on the ruins of that love, which is, and ought

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 108-9.

to be, common amongst all the members. The words of Saint Ambrose on this subject are well deserving notice: "What necessity can you have," says he, "to expose yourself by keeping silence? I have seen a great many fall by speaking, but *never one by silence.*"

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<sup>1</sup>Saint Benedict, who was well informed on this subject and who considered it in the same manner, was so exact in the observance of silence that he will not allow his disciples to speak, unless they are asked a question, or moved by some real necessity. He orders that the permission of speaking be only seldom granted to the religious, even to such as are perfect (that is, such as would not make any bad use of a necessary permission to speak), though their words should be holy, and their subjects edifying. In fine, that holy legislator makes the observance of silence a constant rule, which ought to occupy the attention of religious persons at all times.

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<sup>2</sup>Saint Bernard and all his brethren observed a silence so profound that those that did not understand either the greatness or the excellency of this secret, censured their conduct as being the effect of stupidity.

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<sup>3</sup>The religious who were formed by that great saint, and filled with his spirit, were so zealous for this holy exercise, and thought it so important, that they instituted signs to treat of necessary matters, that so they might never be obliged to speak. *The practice of silence sanctified the whole Cistercian Order:* the Carthusians followed their example, and obliged their lay brethren to observe it with rigorous exactitude; so much so, that they have kept it ever since with the same fidelity as the fundamental rule of entire solitude.

It is difficult to resist the force of these convincing truths. And a Superior who applies himself to the duty of inculcating

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

them to his brethren in a proper manner, must at last succeed in persuading them that the practice of silence is absolutely necessary for their sanctification and perfection.

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#### OF MANUAL LABOR.

<sup>1</sup>Saint Benedict makes it a principal obligation. Idleness, says he, is the enemy of the soul; wherefore the brethren shall be employed at certain times in manual labor. He requires that they should work at the harvest, and in bringing home the corn, when the necessity or poverty of the place requires it; and he exhorts them to do it with pleasure; because, says he, they shall be then truly monks, when they shall live by the labor of their hands, as our fathers and apostles have done. And it appears by many passages of his Rule, that he considers manual labor as one of the most important practices of the religious life.

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<sup>2</sup>Saint Bernard considered manual labor so important and so necessary that he obtained of God by his fervent prayers both the necessary skill and facility to reap the corn, and work at the harvest; and when the brethren were employed at labor that required more strength than he had, he compensated for his inability by digging, carrying wood on his shoulders, and applying himself to other humiliating employments of the monastery.

As to the time they employed in this exercise, it may be learned by consulting the Rule of Saint Benedict, and by their first constitutions. In general, they labored during the summer, from the end of the chapter, or daily assembly (which met always after prime), until tierce, and from none until vespers. In winter, from the conventual mass until none, and during Lent, until vespers; during the harvest, when they worked on the farms, they said prime, the conventual mass,

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 178-9.

and tierce without interruption; so that they might apply themselves to their work, without impediment, during the rest of the forenoon. They frequently said the divine office in the same place where they worked, and at the same time that their brethren at home sung it in the choir.

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<sup>1</sup>One of the principal reasons which induced the solitaries of former times to apply themselves to manual labor, and to lay down such rigorous and general rules for that exercise, was that their whole time might be employed, that there might be no empty space in their lives, and to prevent the fatal consequence of sloth and idleness; being well persuaded, that as soon as they would cease to be employed in holy occupations, it would be impossible for them to avoid being engaged in evil ones; for inaction opens the door to every vice, and closes it to every virtue. Hence the ancient solitaries of Egypt used to say, that the religious who worked was tempted by only one devil, whereas he who spends his time in sloth and idleness is attacked by a great number; all of which combat against him in various ways.

In effect, as sloth destroys all the vigor of the soul, extinguishes that holy fervour which is the principle of its motions in some sense, so it binds up its faculties in the links of dispirited affections, and obstructs its active powers, so that the heart can produce no good affection, nor the spirit form any good thought; and hence, when the passions are irritated and temptations take up arms, the religious is no ways prepared to resist their united efforts; the invisible enemies, taking advantage of his disordered and impotent state, attack him furiously, and carry him a resistless captive wheresoever they please; and this unfortunate soul fails not to rush into every snare they lay, for he may be considered as a man without defence, and exposed to all the darts of his malicious and cruel enemies.

When this vice becomes master of the soul, says Cassian,

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<sup>1</sup> *De Rancé, A Treatise on the Sanctity and on the Duties of the Monastic State.* Vol. II., pp. 179-81.



it either engages the solitary to remain in his cell in a state of inaction, without doing anything for his spiritual advancement, or it drives him forth, and makes him wander from place to place in a constant round of instability; that so, becoming incapable of any good, he may do nothing more than run from one cell to another, from monastery to monastery, on pretext of visiting his brethren; but in effect, being led on by no other motive but that of finding a good repast, for the slothful are frequently influenced by the care of what they shall eat. Behold the true state of such persons; thus they go on, until they find some man or woman in the same slothful and effeminate dispositions, in whose embarrassing affairs they may engage themselves without scruple. Thus they undertake the most dangerous occupations, without scruple, and by little and little they yield themselves up to the serpent's folds, from whence they cannot extricate themselves; hence they no longer enjoy that liberty, so necessary to labor in attaining the perfection of their state.

The holy fathers, whose rules we have before cited, were of this opinion, nor had Saint Benedict any other, for he takes express notice in his rule, that of the motives which induced him to enjoin manual labor, the greatest was to secure the brethren from idleness, which he considers as a cruel enemy of the soul. This was also the opinion of the holy Abbot Paul—this great anchorite, having labored with great assiduity, burned all his works at the end of the year, because he lived so remote from all society that he could not send them to any market.

The second reason that induced the ancient solitaries to recommend manual labor so earnestly was that they thought it unbecoming for persons who made profession of the solitary life to eat that bread which they had not gained by the sweat of their brow; they understood that sentence of the holy scripture as being literally addressed to themselves:—“*Thou shalt eat thy bread in the sweat of thy brow.*” And they believed that nothing was more agreeable, nor more conformable to the condition of penitents, who by their vocation were